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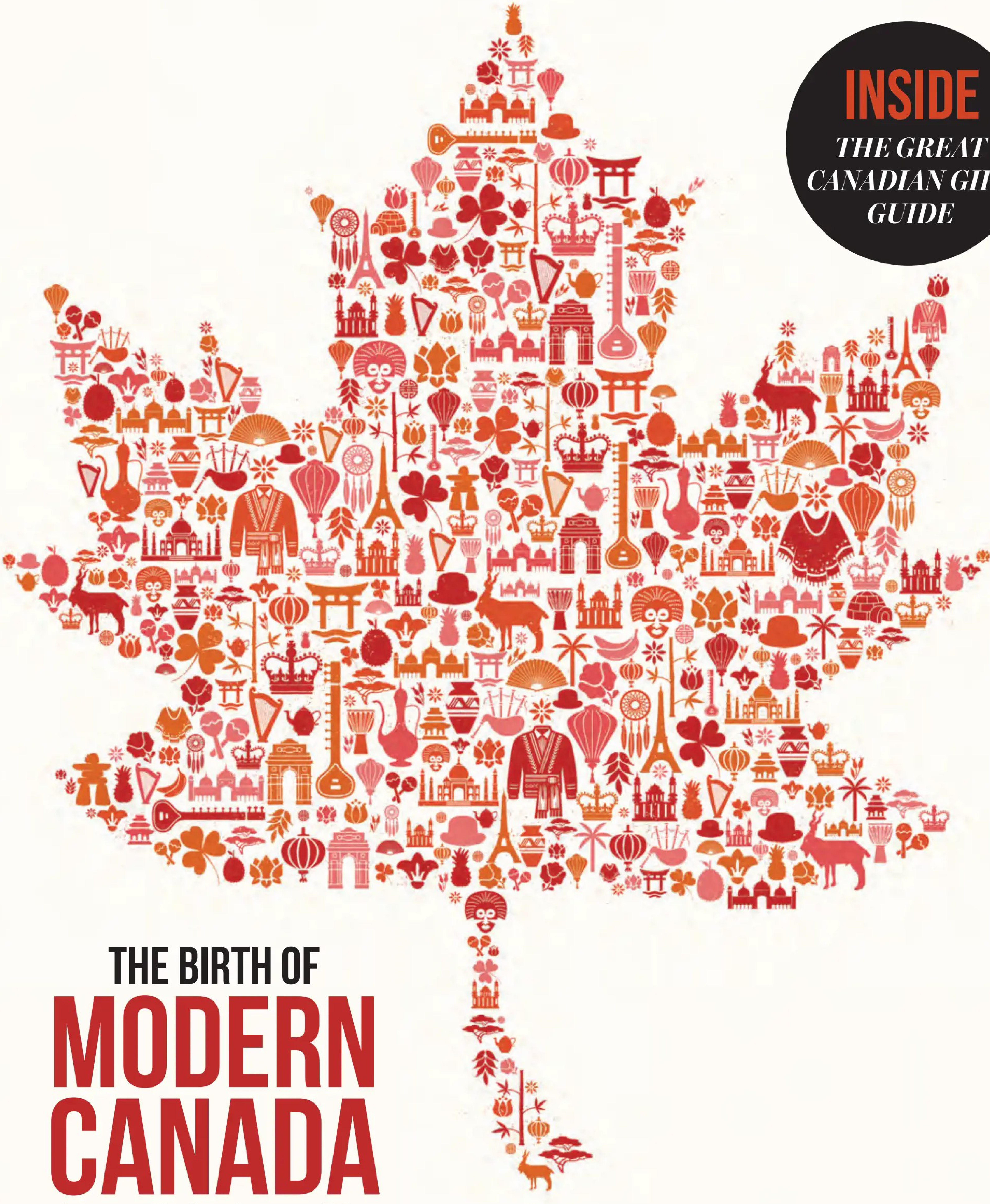
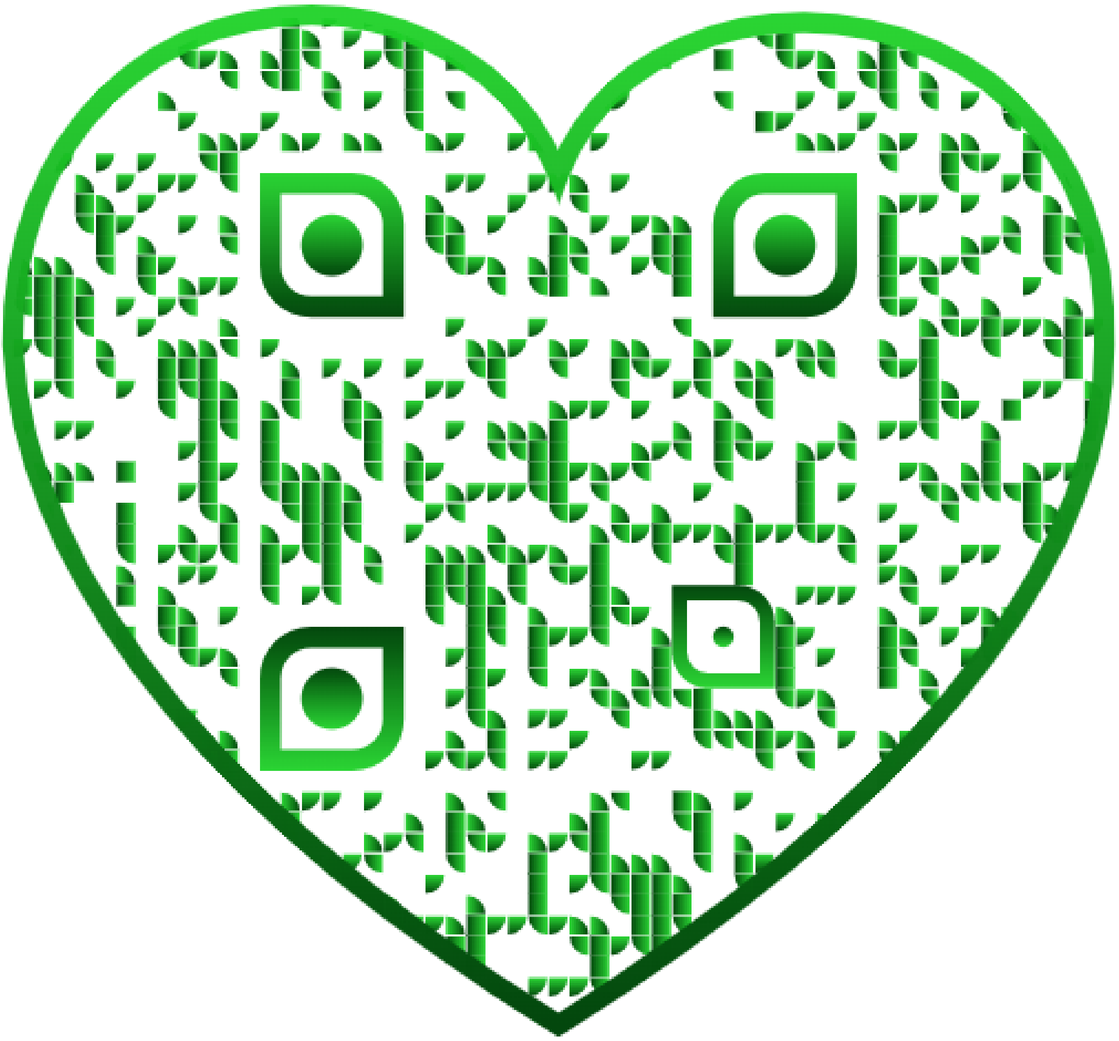


THE BIRTH OF MODERN CANADA

A mosaic in the making



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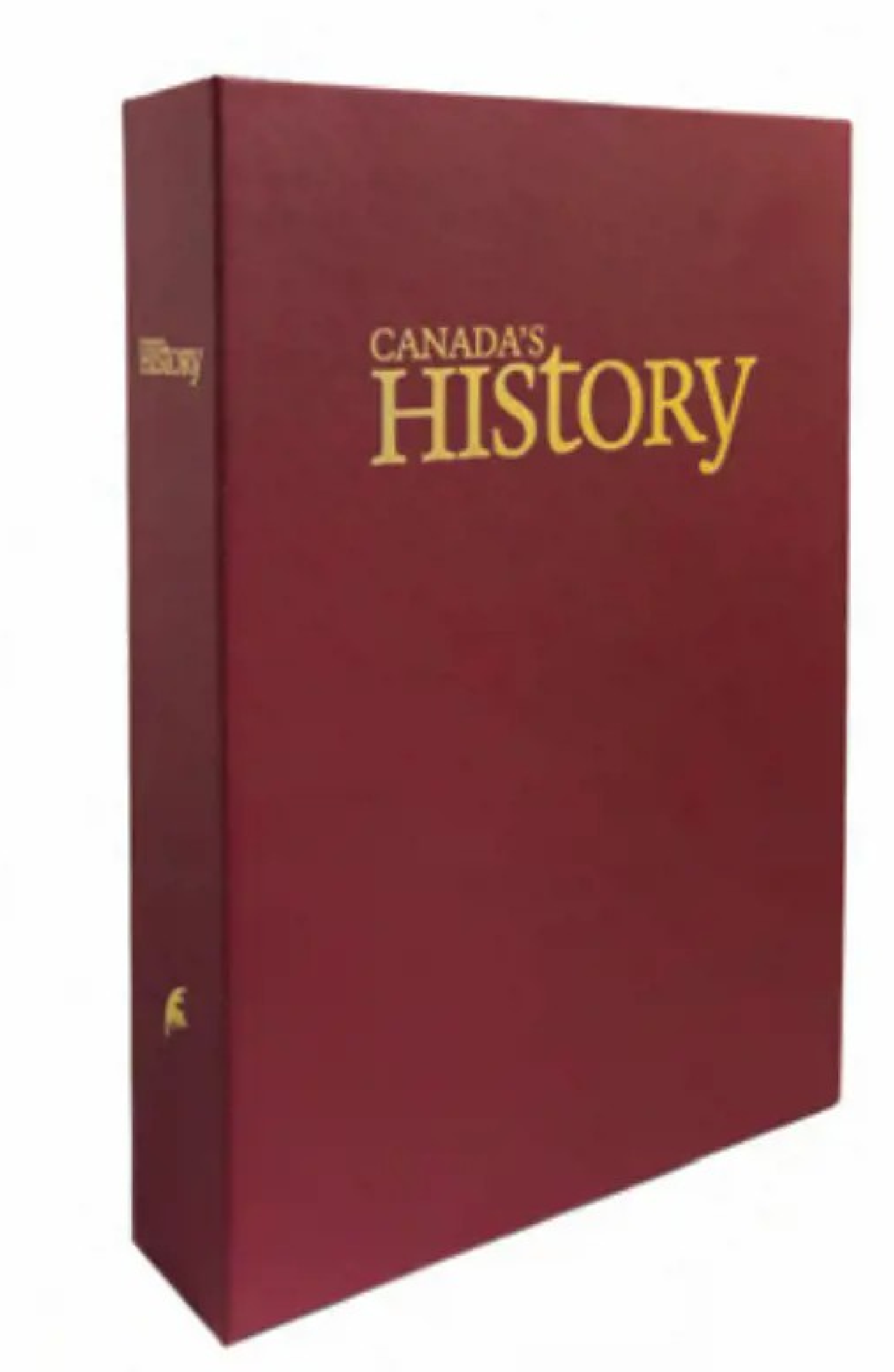
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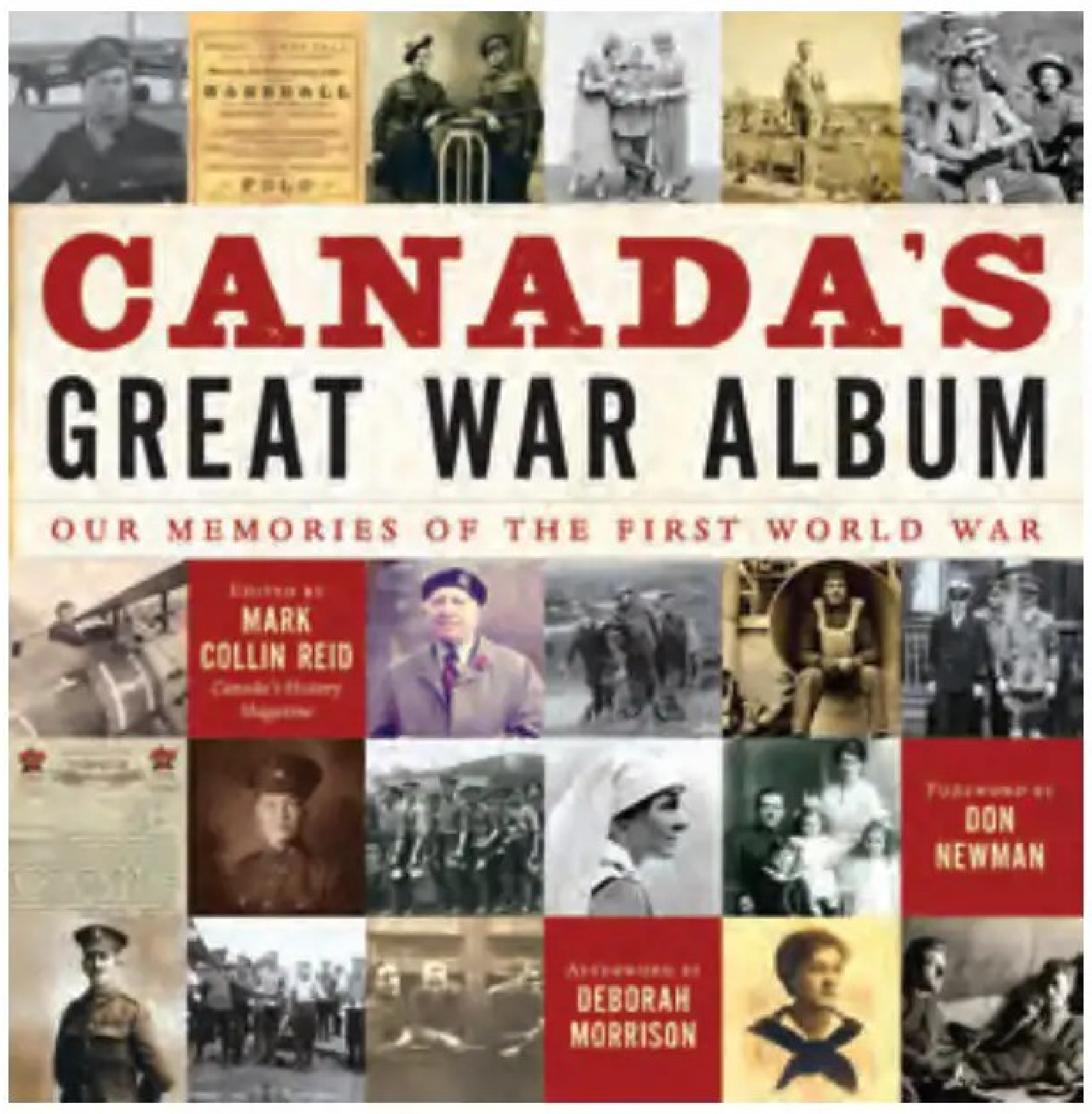
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created the art for our cover and “Mosaic in the Making” (page 24). Based in Matane, Que., Thibault delivers bold, thought-provoking illustrations that blend irony, surrealism and political commentary. With a style that rides the line between sharp and raw, his work features graphic shapes, simplified form and intense colour — creating striking visual symbols.

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Volume 105, Issue 6, Winter 2025

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Our work includes *Canada's History* magazine, *Kayak: Canada's History Magazine for Kids/Navigue dans l'histoire du Canada*, the Governor General's History Awards, the National Program for Canada's Heritage Fairs, and CanadasHistory.ca/HistoireCanada.ca.

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Postage paid in Winnipeg.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40063001.

Printed in Canada.

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES

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SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

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Vol. 1
OCTOBER, 1920
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Formerly The Beaver
ARCTIC VISIONS
Two groundbreaking films.
Nanook of the North soared. The other was forgotten.
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THE BIRTH OF
MODERN CANADA
A mosaic in the making

Above (from left): The first issue of *The Beaver*, changing our name to *Canada's History* in 2010 and our fresh new look

New style, more substance

Welcome to the reimagined *Canada's History* magazine — the result of months of painstaking work by everyone on the team. We hope you'll enjoy the fruits of our labour: a more open, inviting contemporary look to complement and showcase the rich and diverse stories that make up this country's history.

You'll find even more of those stories in every issue since we're also introducing two new departments: The Dish, which tells the tale behind (and shares a recipe for) a well-loved food; and Restoration, which looks at heritage buildings that have been given fresh, meaningful purpose.

Best of all, we'll continue to bring you the intelligent, thoughtful journalism you've come to expect in our pages. This special double issue is proof of that. From our cover feature, "Mosaic in the Making" (page 24), which sheds light on the 40 years of immigration policies that have created modern Canada, to "Shots Fired" (page 42), which traces this country's role in the development and mainstreaming of vaccinations, to "The Lives of the Lachine Canal" (page 62), a look at the now-200-year-old waterway, you'll find enlightening and thought-provoking stories.

We haven't forgotten about entertainment. Turn to page 34 for a roundup of Canada's quirkiest museums, then flip to page 50, where hockey fans can revel in some of the best moments in our favourite sport.

We hope you'll enjoy this new era of *Canada's History*.

INSET: HEATHER DOUGHTY

Canada's Fay Wray with Bruce Cabot in 1933's *King Kong*

ALAMY

Monstrous omission

While it was interesting to hear about famous Canadians in the film industry ("The Reel Story," August-September 2025), I was surprised to see no mention of *King Kong*'s original femme fatale — Cardston, Alta.'s own Fay Wray!

Keith Aiken
Beaumont, Alta.

Mysterious mini mug

In the October-November 2025 issue, there's a picture of a tin mug ("Curiosity About the Cat") along with an unanswered question: "What purpose could an item like this serve and why did it find its way into the HBC Museum Collection? ... it remains a mysterious little artifact."

I have a set of Chinese cups that are very tiny; drawings of junk ships have been seen on B.C.'s West Coast; it's tin and not very breakable; it looks more like a picture of a tiger with perhaps carp swimming along the bottom; and the white parts look like chipped paint. So maybe it was made in China, brought over on one of those junks and held tea.

Mary Lowther
Mesachie Lake, B.C.

A beautiful sound

As the writer of the libretto for the musical production *Sounding Thunder: The Song of Francis Pegahmagabow*, I read "Remembrance Day Project" (October-November 2025) with interest. Much like the community projects you highlighted, *Sounding Thunder* honours the life and legacy of a First World War veteran — the renowned Anishinaabe-Ojibwa sniper and political activist Francis Pegahmagabow.

Commissioned as an effort toward reconciliation by the Festival of the Sound in Parry Sound, Ont., *Sounding Thunder* brought composer Tim Corlis and me together, along with some of the country's best classical musicians, as well as Indigenous actors with familial connections to Pegahmagabow.

The response has been overwhelming. The production played in February 2025 in Vancouver to 1,200 students and in September to 300 people in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., for the 1850 Robinson-Huron Treaty celebrations. We are honoured to bring it to Ottawa in November, where it plays at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum for Remembrance Day.

Armand Garnet Ruffo
Kingston, Ont.

Email comments to editors@CanadasHistory.ca or write to *Canada's History*, Bryce Hall Main Floor, 515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9. Letters may be edited for length and style.

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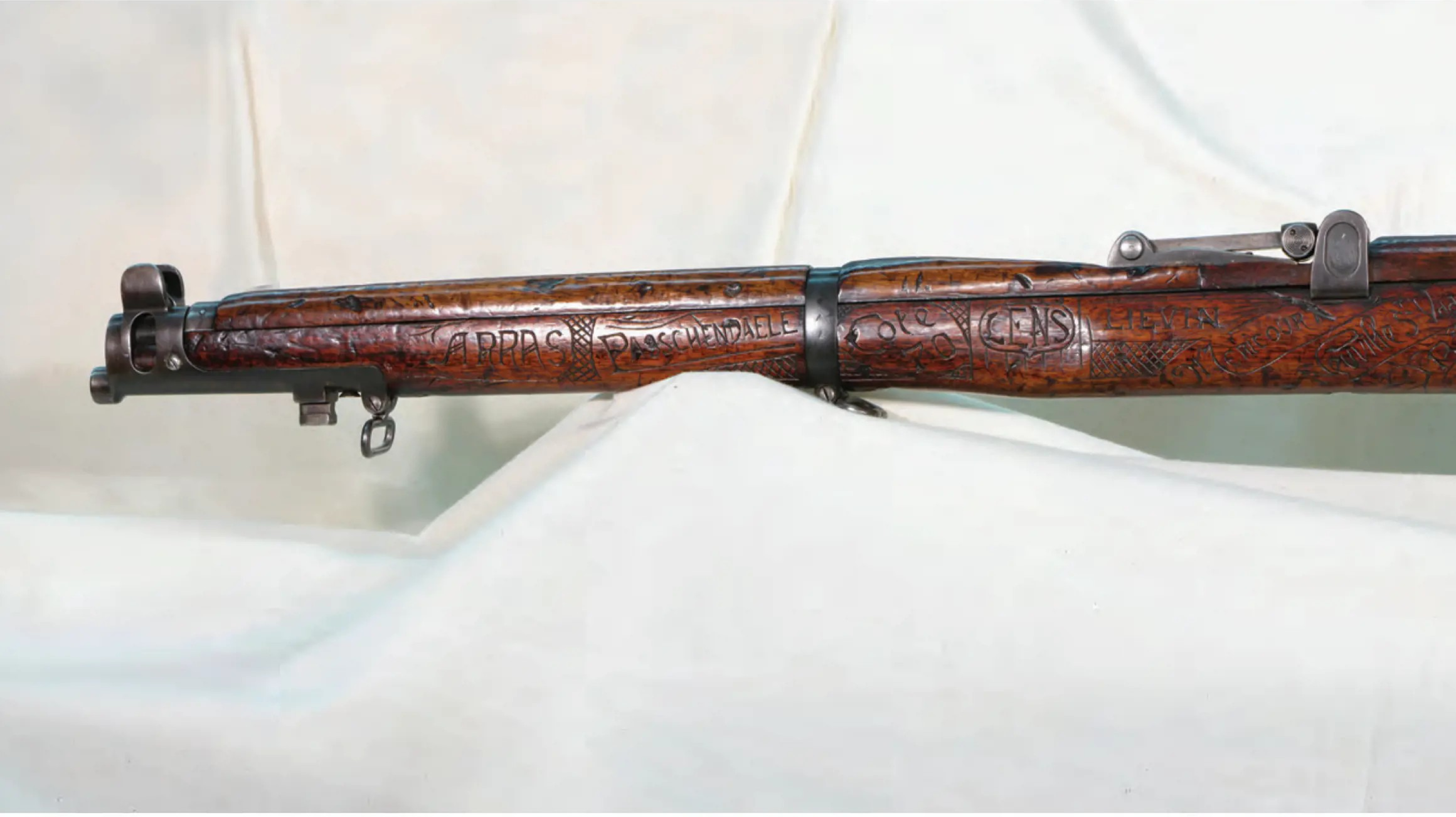


OBJECT OF INTEREST

Long shot

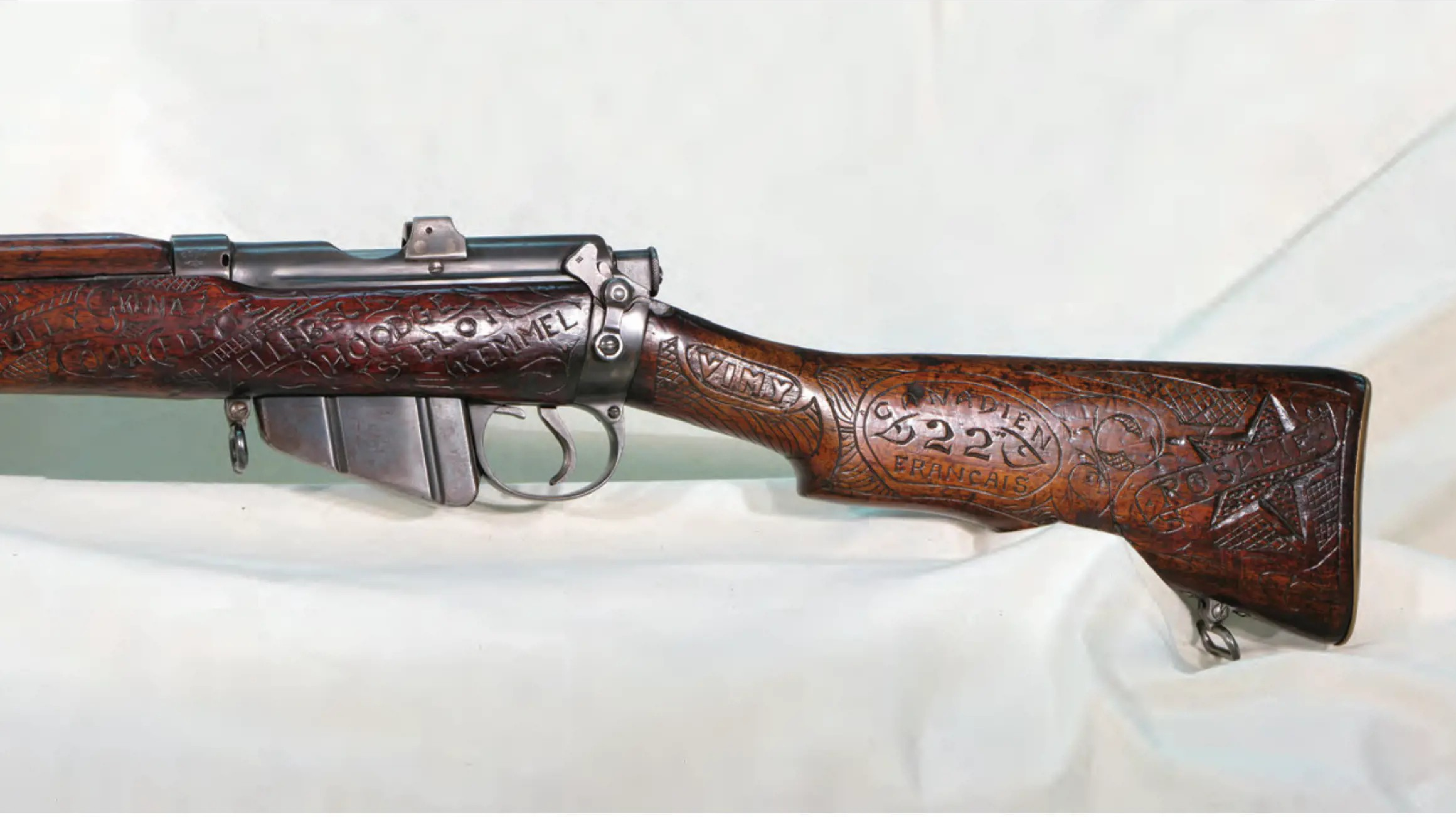
A soldier carved his memories into his First World War weapon

This 1916 Lee-Enfield No. 1 MK III, a .303-calibre rifle, nicknamed "Rosalie," belonged to Henri-Paul Lecorre, a volunteer with the Canadian Expeditionary Force's 22nd Battalion, Canada's only entirely francophone infantry regiment.

Enduring difficult conditions on the Western Front, Lecorre consoled himself by carving the names of the battles in which he fought into his rifle — including Arras, Passchendaele, Courcelette and Vimy — a contravention of army regulations. Because he had "damaged" the rifle, he was obliged to reimburse its cost. After losing his weapon during a gas attack in June 1918, Lecorre did not see his cherished Rosalie again until 38 years later, when he spotted it in an exhibition of military artifacts in Lachute, Que.
— *Annick Desmarais*

This article originally appeared in *Cinquante merveilles de nos musées: Les Plus beaux trésors de la francophonie canadienne.* This special-interest publication was part of Projet Portage, a five-year Canada's History Society initiative to connect history lovers in French and English Canada, generously supported by the Molson Foundation.

MUSÉE ROYAL 22E RÉGIMENT


VIMY
CANADIEN
22
FRANCAIS
KEMMEL

Above: Henri-Paul Lecorre's "Rosalie" was lost in a 1918 gas attack

PASSCHENDAELE
ARRAS
VIMY

Left: Lecorre's carvings of "Passchendaele," "Arras" and "Vimy"

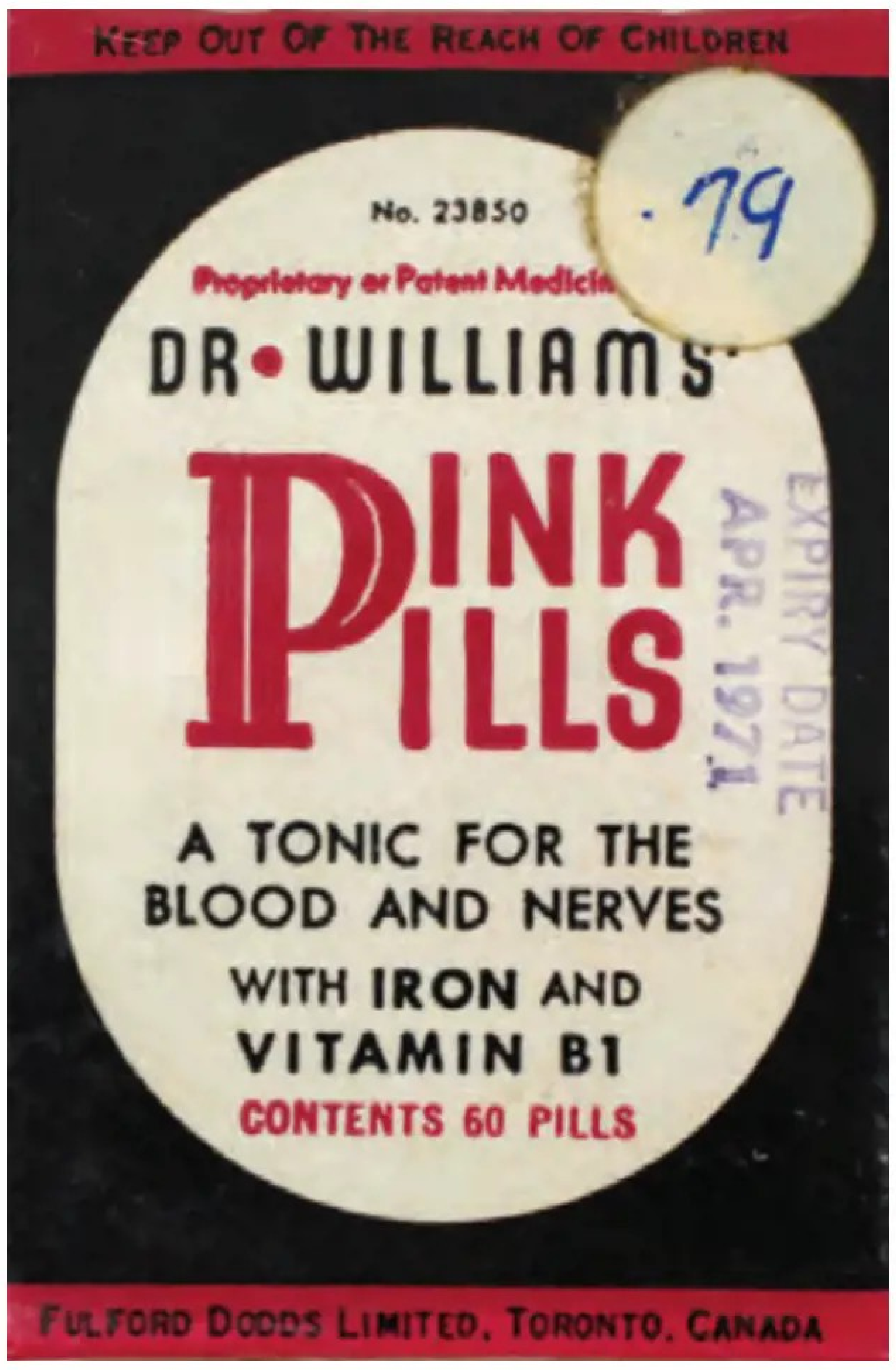
WORDS OF WISDOM

“Our land is more valuable than your money. It will last forever. It will not perish as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow and, through all of the years, it will give life to men and beasts. We cannot sell the lives of men and animals, and so we cannot sell the land. It was put here by the Great Spirit and we cannot sell it because it does not really belong to us.”

— Siksika Chief Isapo-Muxika (Crowfoot),
spoken during treaty negotiations in 1877

MEDICAL MARVELS

Rosy remedy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CONTENTS 60 PILLS
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Housed in a small pink-and-white box, Dr. Williams’ Pink Pills for Pale People once promised renewed vitality for the weak and weary. Developed in Canada in the late 1800s, this iron-rich tonic was marketed as a cure for everything from anemia to paralysis. The name came from Dr. William Jackson of Brockville, Ont., whose recipe was purchased in the 1870s by George T. Fulford for $100 — under the condition that only the doctor’s first name be used.

By the 1960s, Fulford Dodds Limited of Toronto was still producing the pills — now branded Dr. Williams’ Pink Pills — whose blend of vitamin B_1 and iron was promoted as “a tonic for blood and nerves.” Production ceased in 1970 after nearly a century of sales.

The name reflects a boom in patent medicine, when bold claims filled pharmacy shelves long before rigorous clinical trials were commonplace. Today, conditions like anemia are treated with regulated prescription-strength supplements, and while drug marketing in Canada is subject to oversight, our screens still flash with promises of renewed energy, clearer skin or slimmer silhouettes. This little box serves as a reminder that health-care marketing and a hopeful appeal to vanity have long been neatly packaged together.
— Kamila Costello

TOP: ADOBE STOCK. BOTTOM: MUSEUM OF HEALTH CARE AT KINGSTON

THE TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
STEEL PAN
HISTORY AND EVOLUTION
DR. F. I. R. BLAKE

The *B'Lack Then* exhibit features memorabilia detailing the lives of 23 influential Black Canadian artists

CANADA BLACK MUSIC ARCHIVES

Writing a new song

The founders of the Canada Black Music Archives are on a mission to ensure the country's Black musicians get recognition

Can you name 10 Black Canadian musicians who've made a significant contribution to music history? It's a question Phil Vassell asks people who are interested in working with him on the Canada Black Music Archives (CBMA) in Toronto. "Most people struggle with getting to 10," he says. "Now, what does that tell you? It tells you we've got a lot of work to do."

Vassell and his partner, Donna McCurvin, are the architects of CBMA, an initiative they spearheaded to highlight and honour the largely untold and overlooked achievements of Black Canadian musicians. "We're talking about a contribution that dates back to the late 1800s all the way up to the current moment," says Vassell. "Everybody knows Oscar Peterson. Everybody knows Drake and The Weeknd. Everybody knows Maestro Fresh Wes. But then it falls off the cliff after that."

The digital archive features an ever-growing searchable directory of detailed biographies of Black Canadian musicians. Curated playlists, long-form podcast interviews with important musical figures and other resources round out the offerings. (Full disclosure: I'm on CBMA's Advisory Board.)

Beyond the online space, CBMA hosts live events; past performances have included hip-hop artists Michie Mee and the Dream Warriors, and Canada's Queen of Reggae Nana McLean.

Additionally, the CBMA's walking tour takes participants to overlooked and significant music history spaces along Eglinton Avenue West in Toronto in the area known as Little Jamaica.

CBMA's latest exhibit, *B'Lack Then: Muted Melodies*, features artifacts and memorabilia that detail the lives and legacies of 23 influential Black Canadian artists. On display until the end of February 2026, the exhibit is in partnership with the Archives of Ontario and includes recordings of the Ball Family Jubilee Singers — a St. Catharines, Ont.-based gospel music group that toured North America for approximately 40 years, from the late 1800s through the early 1900s.

CBMA hopes to incorporate more information and archives from all over the country in its digital database. "Our goal," says Vassell, "is to see that educational institutions have access to information we're researching and documenting."
— Del Cowie

THE
JOURNAL

Brian Stewart joined CBC's *The Journal* as senior reporter in 1987

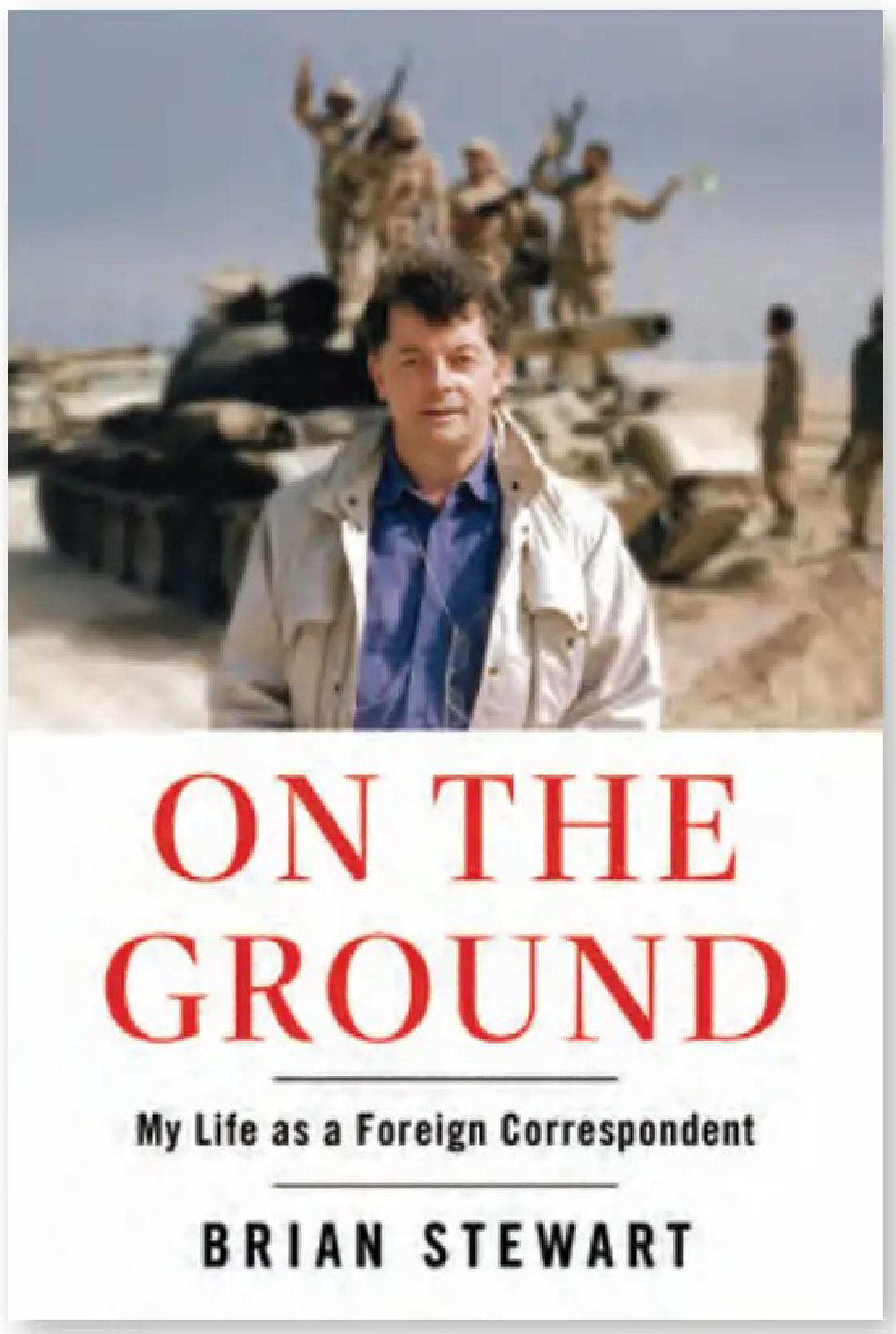
QUESTION PERIOD

Reporting back

Brian Stewart spent decades covering world events for CBC's *The National* and *The Journal*. His memoir, *On the Ground: My Life as a Foreign Correspondent*, was published by Simon & Schuster Canada in September. Stewart shared with *Canada's History* reflections on his work and the state of contemporary journalism

Is there a moment in your career that stands out for you?
The one that affected me the most was the Ethiopian famine [in the '80s] because that deposited me and a small CBC crew in the epicentre of the worst famine since the Second World War — one that threatened seven million people. Seeing mass suffering on that scale really scarred me and taught me two things: first, that journalism had to let the world know what was going on; and second, journalism often made the mistake of rushing in, covering catastrophes and then going away. So, I go back to many of the stories I covered before and try to update people.

If you were reporting today, how do you feel that the internet, social media and widespread disinformation would impact the way you report?
Well, I'd have much more information quickly. We would work on a story for a week; now, they want the story that afternoon, or the next day. I do recognize that journalists today have certain advantages — not only the training they receive but also the remarkable access to information, and hopefully, a lot of good, solid common sense. But how do we accept a tsunami of information and filter it properly so we're getting the goods and not just informational mayhem?



TOP: COURTESY OF BRIAN STEWART. BOTTOM: SIMON & SCHUSTER CANADA.

Above: After a TV network mixup, Stewart unexpectedly interviews then British prime minister Margaret Thatcher in May 1984

Left: During the October Crisis in 1970, Stewart (centre) tries to get answers from then Montreal mayor Jean Drapeau (left)

COURTESY OF BRIAN STEWART

How important is journalism from foreign correspondents today?
It's tremendously important. We face a real information crisis in much of the western world, where foreign bureaus are being closed down and foreign correspondents are being reduced, so we're relying more on outside sources of information. Canada really needs far more foreign correspondents out there reporting on issues that affect Canada and Canadians.

These days, it's easy to feel overwhelmed with climate change, the Trump administration, Gaza, Ukraine and more. After all you've witnessed, what gives you hope?
You do see the worst moments often turn out not so bad. I wrote a diary throughout the October Crisis [in 1970], when we thought the world might be blown apart. A couple of years later, we're talking about better relations with the Soviet Union, and the Cold War mellowed its way out to eventual oblivion in the '80s.

In terms of the American situation, it's very hard to be optimistic. I've seen awful moments in America: the McCarthy era, the 1960s with the riots, the segregation battles and cities burning — all of that upheaval and misery. So, I'm old enough to say, well, there'll be a change, and people will get tired of the thuggery, the appalling manners and the lies. A year into it, there may be a real fatigue with this monstrous circus show that the United States president is foisting on the whole world, and people might say, "It's time for the end of Trumpism." I would like to say I'm confident that's going to come, but I'm not because I've never seen anything quite like the Donald Trump phenomenon. And I hope to hell I never see anything like it again.

For more from Brian Stewart, visit **CanadasHistory.ca/ReportingBack**.

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FASHION STATEMENT

Knit wit

In 2002, then-university students Jordan Birch and Chris Boyd tried on tacky penguin sweaters at a Vancouver mall one day, and got a genius idea. Their first ugly Christmas sweater party was a runaway youth culture hit. Their blueprint has spread around the world, where annual festivities continued until the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

Christmas sweaters weren't always ugly. In the 1950s, "jingle bell sweaters" were adorned with elegant reindeer and Nordic snowflake patterns. Popularized by squeaky-clean crooner Andy Williams, known as "Mr. Christmas" for his cheery holiday TV specials, the craze was short-lived. But vintage versions kept the concept simmering away in the background.

The fashion pendulum swung back, and the pervasive influence of '90s minimalism relegated those eye-popping sweaters to dust collectors in our closets. Then in 2001, actor Colin Firth as mild-mannered lawyer Mark Darcy in *Bridget Jones's Diary*, somehow made the goofy, red-nosed reindeer sweater that his mom made him wear to a party read as adorable, rather than embarrassing. The message it sent was nostalgic escapism, a balm for the fraught mood of the new millennium.

Since then, the fast-fashion machine took up the merry theme, churning out spangled, holly-bedecked and Santa- and elf-themed versions around the world by the cargo-hold load — including versions for Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Today, we live in a whiplash of instant-trend cycles, but the sweetly dorky Christmas sweater is so far out of fashion that it will remain a true Canadian classic.
—Leanne Delap

ADOBE STOCK

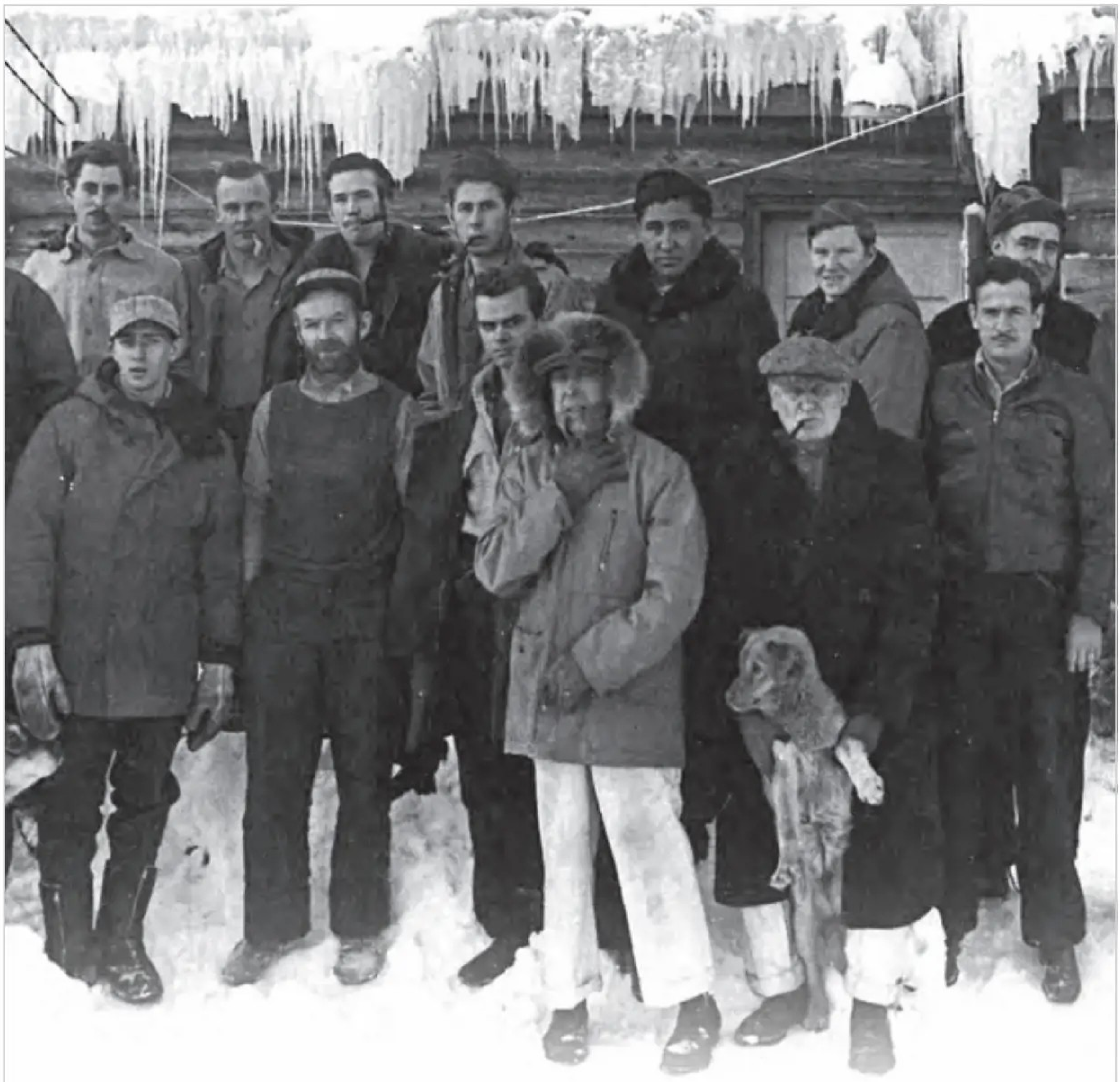
YOU DON'T SAY

Slang from the 1920s was the bee's knees

The 1920s are known as a roaring good time — the First World War had ended and society was freer than ever. Not surprisingly, the era's slang reflected that upbeat party culture. Some terms, like "flapper" and "big cheese," are still understood today. The ones to the right, though, seem to have gone the way of Prohibition.

applesauce: nonsense
giggle water: alcoholic drink
glad rags: party clothes
jake: good, fine
know your onions: be knowledgeable

A couple of glad-rag-wearing dancers kick up their heels; giggle water may have been involved



Snag residents endure the record-setting bone-chilling cold in February 1947. The first three men in the back row, from the left are Snag Airport weather observers Max Bowitz, Gordon Toole and Wilf Blezard

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY

The biggest chill

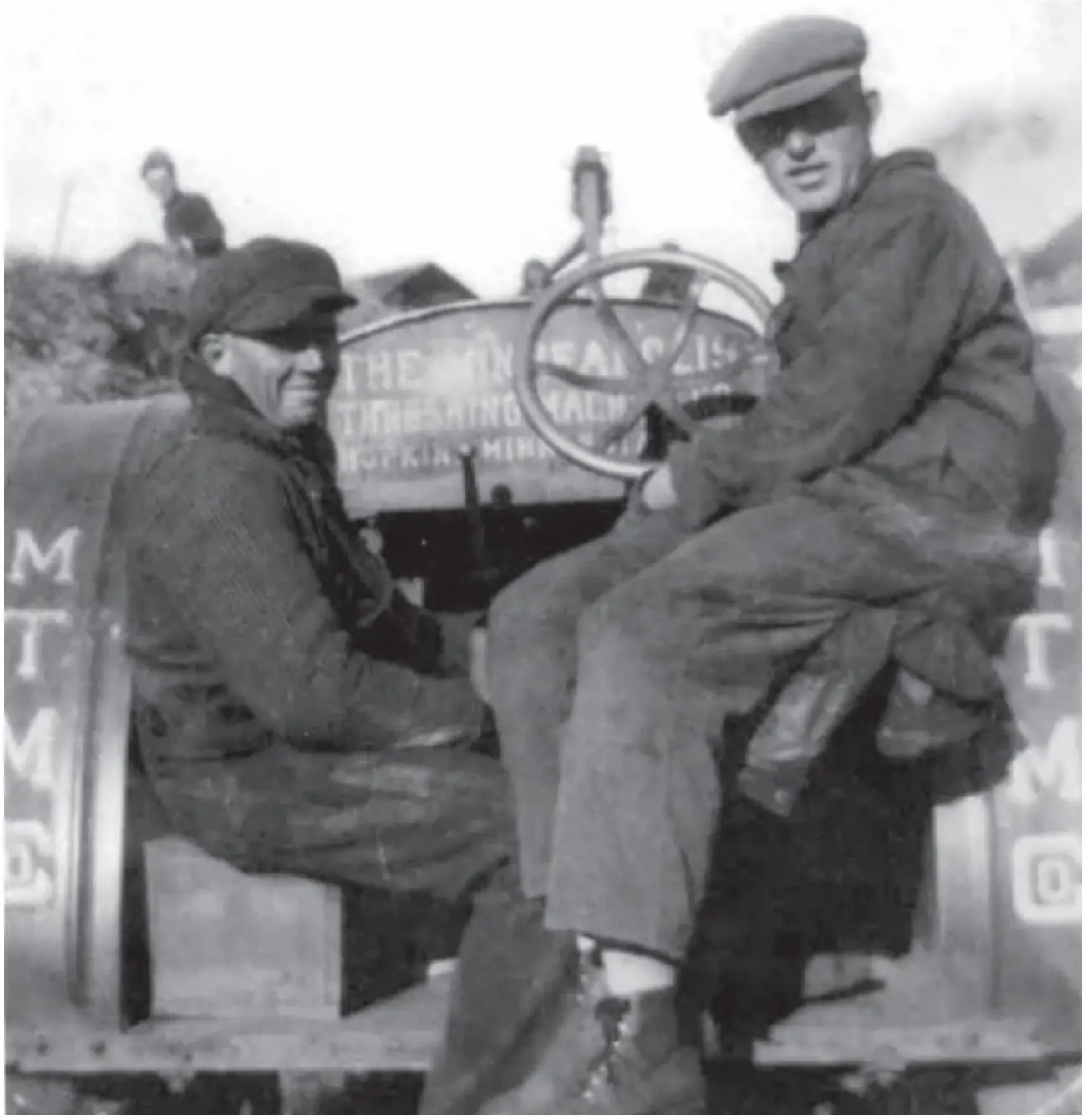
Some of us live for summer's warmer temperatures, while others like nothing more than a bracing mid-winter day. But even the hardiest Canuck would likely freeze at the thought of -63°C (-81.4°F). That was the temperature recorded in Snag, Yukon, on Feb. 3, 1947, and it's still the lowest ever recorded in Canada.

What did it feel like to experience -63°C? Those venturing outside left vapour trails that hung in the air for up to four minutes before fading. Sounds such as talking or dogs barking could be heard more than six kilometres away.

"We threw a dish of water high in the air, just to see what would happen," Wilf Blezard, a weather observer in Snag, noted at the time. "Before it hit the ground, it made a hissing noise, froze and fell as tiny round pellets of ice the size of wheat kernels."

How cool is that? — *CH staff*

TOP: CITY OF TORONTO ARCHIVES; BOTTOM: *THE BEAVER*



On track together

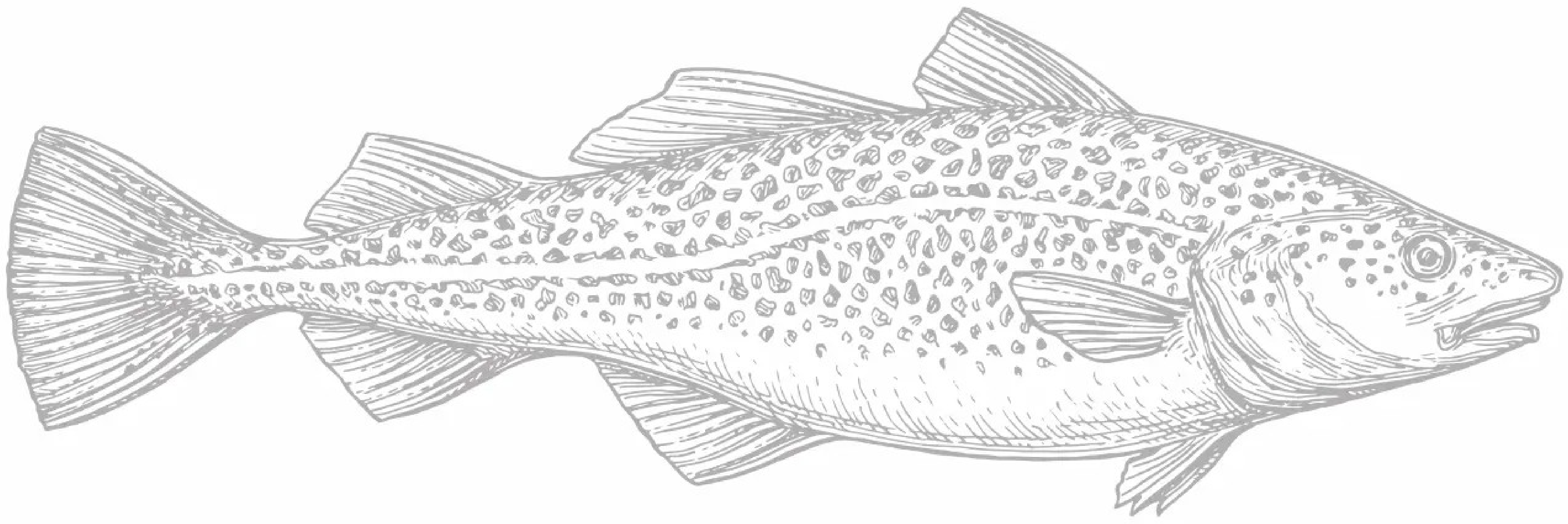
Pictured is my father, Bernhard “Ben” Krause, sitting on the right of the tractor, with his neighbour John Klaassen on the left, around 1925 in Saskatchewan. Both were born in what became Oklahoma — Klaassen in 1902 and Dad in 1903 — before their Mennonite families immigrated to Canada in 1918, settling about 80 kilometres north of Saskatoon.

Why the move to Canada? Mostly due to concern that the older brothers in both families were of draft age, and while the Canadian government had acknowledged that conscientious objectors could choose alternative service over conscription, the United States had not.

They joined other Mennonite families in Eigenheim (meaning “home of one’s own” in German), a rural community that still exists west of the town of Rosthern. My father and Klaassen not only went on to establish mixed farms but they also married sisters: Dad married Helena Epp and Klaassen married her younger sister Anna. The move to Canada clearly came with numerous and long-lasting rewards. CH

Submitted by Carl A. Krause of Saskatoon

Do you have a photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in Canada’s history? If so, have it copied (please don’t send originals) and mail it to Album, c/o Canada’s History, Bryce Hall Main Floor, 515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9. Or email it to album@CanadasHistory.ca. Please provide your contact information and a brief description of the photo, including its date and location, details about people appearing in the photograph, and further information about the event or situation illustrated. Photos may be adjusted for the magazine.



A fish tale

This homey casserole brings the sea to tables throughout Newfoundland and Labrador

By Gabby Peyton

The waters that surround Canada's most easterly province are dotted with dories in the summer months. They're jigging cod, which, despite the 1992 moratorium and limits on commercial and recreational fisheries, remains king in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It's so ubiquitous that "fish" almost always means "cod" there. Cod au gratin, a comforting cheesy fish casserole, is beloved across the province and works well with both fresh and frozen cod; it's appreciated year-round, though especially at Christmastime. It's a staple on restaurant menus and often found bubbling in Nan's oven on Christmas Eve.

Some think the first appearance of a written cod au gratin recipe was in the seminal cookbook *Fat-Back & Molasses: A Collection of Favourite Old Recipes from Newfoundland & Labrador* by Rev. Ivan F. Jesperson, published in 1974. But many iterations with a variety of names appeared earlier in community cookbooks, church publications and newspapers across the province. The Nov. 10, 1933, column "Dietetics for the Home" in Corner Brook's *Western Star* features a recipe for "Cod Fish au Gratin." In St. John's, a 1939 *Observer's Weekly* column titled "Features of Interest to Women" included a recipe for "Cod and Cheese au Gratin" in a multi-page spread on the importance of eating fish. This was likely an unnecessary nudge, since the 1935 census notes Newfoundlanders were eating 40 pounds of cod a year, "ninth among the fish-eating countries of the world."

The Treasury of Newfoundland Dishes was first published in 1958 by the Maple Leaf Milling Company and the recipe for "Codfish au Gratin Casserole" appeared there as well as in subsequent editions. At the start of the fish section, editor Sally West wrote: "Folks with a love of the sea are always noted for their excellent fish dishes, and here's where Newfoundland cooking comes into its own." The cookbook contains 51 fishy recipes; 21 are cod-based.

Regardless of its culinary historiography, cod au gratin has been a staple for home cooks and restaurants for almost 100 years. The now-closed St. John's restaurant Bacalao garnered fame for its fancification of the dish in the late 2000s, but these days, most local grocery stores have a high-end version to take home and bake. **CH**

GABBY PEYTON is a bestselling author, culinary historian and food and travel writer based in St. John's, N.L., where she's always planning her next trip — to eat.

Cod au Gratin

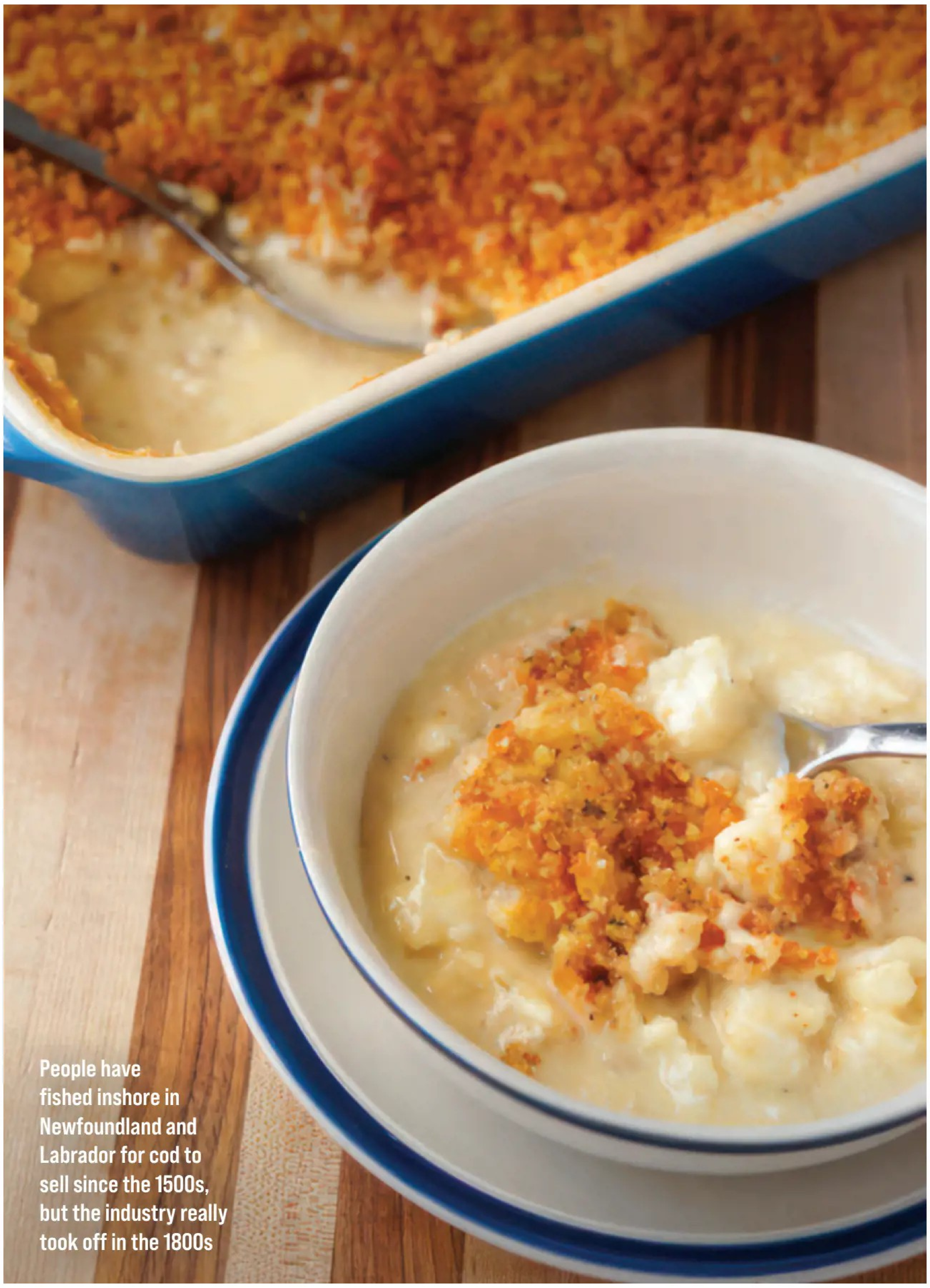
Prep time:
30 minutes

Total time:
1 hour 15 minutes

Servings:
4 to 6

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ lb cod fillets, skinned, deboned and cut in bite-size chunks
- ¼ tsp salt, divided
- ¼ tsp pepper, divided
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 5 tbsp salted butter, divided
- 3 tbsp flour
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tbsp lemon zest, divided
- 1 tsp dried oregano, divided
- 2 cups grated cheddar cheese, divided
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 cup dried bread crumbs



People have fished inshore in Newfoundland and Labrador for cod to sell since the 1500s, but the industry really took off in the 1800s

GABBY PEYTON

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F.

In 8-cup casserole dish, season cod with a pinch each of salt and pepper. (Tip: If using frozen cod, thaw completely and pat dry with paper towel.)

In saucepan, heat olive oil over medium heat; cook onion until softened and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add 3 tbsp of the butter and let melt; add flour, whisking. Slowly add milk, whisking constantly until sauce is thickened and clings to back of spoon.

Stir in ½ tbsp of the lemon zest and ½ tsp of the oregano. Stir in ½ cup each of the cheddar and Parmesan and season with a pinch each of salt and pepper until well combined.

Pour cheese sauce over cod, stirring until well coated.

To make crispy bread crumb topping, in microwaveable bowl, combine bread crumbs and remaining 2 tbsp of butter; microwave on medium-high until butter is melted. Stir in ¾ cup of the remaining cheddar and ¼ cup of the remaining Parmesan.

Cover cod mixture with remaining ¾ cup cheddar and ¼ cup Parmesan. Top with bread crumb mixture. Sprinkle with remaining ½ tbsp lemon zest, ½ tsp oregano and pepper.

Bake until bubbly and golden, about 40 minutes. Let rest for about 20 minutes before serving.

COVER STORY

Mosaic in the Making

The birth of modern Canada

By John Lorinc

Illustrations by Sébastien Thibault

“Welcome to Hindi Heights. Population: 2 Many.”

In early 1975, someone affixed the handbill to a pole in a Vancouver neighbourhood whose South Asian residents were becoming targets of racial aggression: graffiti, vandalism, stones thrown at the windows of homes. White residents complained about “poor driving skills” and losing jobs to these newcomers. Vancouver’s newspapers played up the tensions. In one case, several Indian men set up a watch group, the East Indian Defence Committee. The *Province* labelled them “vigilantes.”

Former British Columbia premier Ujjal Dosanjh, who arrived from India in 1968 and was in law school, recalls that South Asian immigrants initially were well accepted, but something shifted as large numbers of tourists began arriving in the province and applying to immigrate. “It was around that time you had people being spat at on buses, windows being smashed at night with rocks,” says Dosanjh.

This sentiment wasn’t confined to Vancouver; it swept into Toronto as well, with attacks in public spaces and an area known as Little India on Gerrard Street East, a cluster of restaurants, groceries and boutiques anchored by a Bollywood theatre, says historian Aqeel Ihsan. On the subway, “someone might call you a derogatory slur, someone might spit on you, comment on your skin colour, comment on how you smell. There were a lot of smell-related incidents,” he says.

Experts sought to account for what seemed like a split screen in public opinion. After all, at the very height of 1960s progressivism, Canada had replaced the use of racial categories and quotas with a colour-blind points system, formalized its refugee policy and loosened admission rules to allow more extended families.

Yet, even before stories about anti-South Asian blowback began to dominate headlines, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's Liberals had an inkling its reforms weren't landing, despite all the sunny rhetoric about Canada as a cultural "mosaic." In 1974, the federal government released a green paper on immigration to tee up the work of a special parliamentary committee and public hearings, all in the service of passing a new immigration act.

The timing wasn't great. The 1973 OPEC oil embargo had triggered stagflation and unemployment. The political Tetris facing Trudeau was to overhaul an antiquated immigration system, re-establish administrative order, deliver labour-force goals and win re-election.

As for the attacks on South Asians, the special committee's December 1975 report devoted just three pages to the topic. While acknowledging how, during hearings, MPs and senators were told that immigrants brought infectious diseases, crime, overcrowding and slums, and also took advantage of Canadian social programs, the authors stressed there was no evidence to support those claims. "[M]isconceptions," they concluded, "abound."

Except for the past two years, it's possible to see postwar immigration in Canada as a mostly linear narrative — the mythic tale of an overwhelmingly white country that decamped from the killing fields of Europe, eventually emerging as a post-racial urban society that embraces ethnocultural diversity more completely than any other place on earth. Canada's big cities, though hardly perfect, buzz with the entrepreneurial energy of newcomers. Campuses and professions like medicine and engineering mirror our shifting demographics, as do traditionally impermeable vocations, such as journalism and law. Systemic bias and anti-immigrant bigotry still exist, and there have been terrible acts of racial violence in London, Ont., and Quebec City. However, Canada's nativists lack a mainstream political home.

Whatever we did worked until 2023, when public-opinion surveys showed a sharp backlash against elevated post-COVID immigration levels, temporary foreign-worker programs, international-visa students and refugee claimants. For the first time since the late 1990s, more Canadians feel there's too much immigration than those who support it.

Current fears about a system adrift offer a historical echo of how Canadians and their governments navigated postwar societal change — a period that began with tentative moves away from an explicitly exclusionary outlook and ended in the late 1980s, when Prime Minister Brian Mulroney tripled Canada's annual immigration targets, to 250,000 newcomers.

Successive governments have justified immigration reforms in terms of their economic and demographic payoffs, and occasionally in moral terms. Their annual targets ebbed and flowed. But they also routinely engaged in bureaucratic equivocation in the face of perceived, and real, opposition from Canadians. Those policies, in turn, were shaped by tectonic global forces, such as the Cold War, the dissolution of the British Empire, the rise of air travel and the pace of European reconstruction.

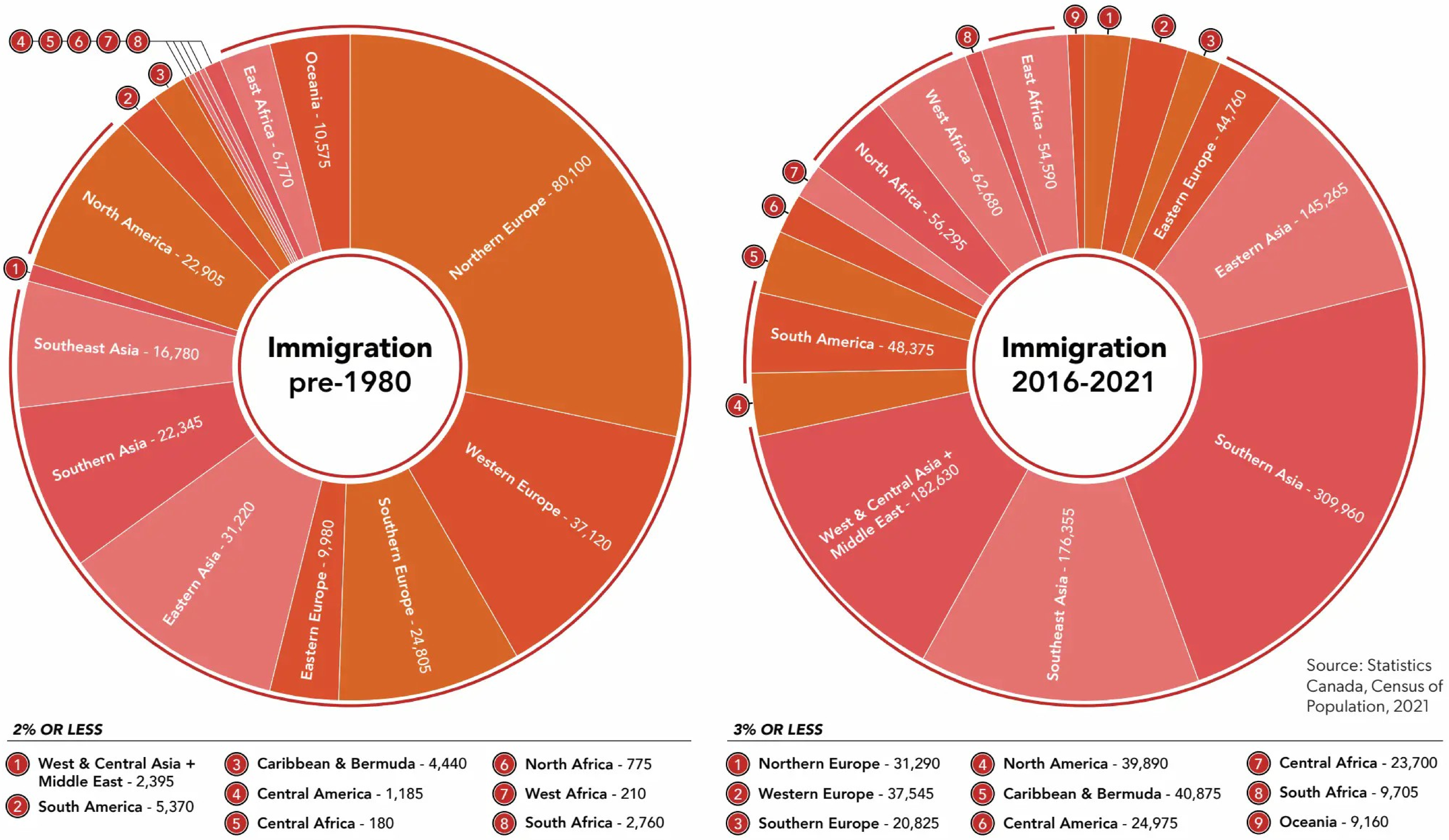
The messiness and the mythology are indivisible, observes Dosanjh. "Both of those things were true, in that you had this sense that we were integrated and generally well accepted, but then you have the rise of right-wing racist groups," he says. "These two realities continue to co-exist. It's not really mythology, and it's not really the truth, either."

Canadian officials wanted only white, Christian and English-speaking newcomers from the British Isles, northern Europe or the United States

Canada is a country built by European colonists and Asian labourers on the ancestral lands of hundreds of Indigenous nations. The young dominion allowed early non-British and non-French immigration for functional reasons, such as bringing in eastern and southern Europeans to mine and farm. Jews fleeing Russian pogroms arrived en masse in the early 20th century, settling in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg.

According to a 1930 order-in-council, Canadian officials wanted only white, Christian and preferably English-speaking newcomers from the British Isles, northern Europe or the United States. They throttled the flow of people from elsewhere using head taxes and strict rules preventing family reunification, in the case of Chinese labourers, or more subtle measures, such as the notorious "continuous passage" regulation that permitted South Asian immigrants to land here only if they'd sailed directly from colonial India (most couldn't).

Immigration flatlined during the Depression. Our policy soon took a darker turn with the internment of Japanese and German Canadians, and the infamous 1939 decision by one of Prime Minister Mackenzie King's officials, Frederick C. Blair, to send the MS *St. Louis*, a Halifax-bound ship carrying 930 Jewish refugees, back to Europe, where hundreds eventually were murdered under Nazi Germany. "It is manifestly impossible for any country to open its



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2021

Above: Prior to 1980, immigrants to Canada were by and large from Europe. After 2016, that trend changed as the numbers of newcomers from Asia began to surge

doors wide enough to take in the hundreds of thousands of Jewish people who want to leave Europe," he told King. "The line must be drawn somewhere."

In the war's immediate aftermath, Canada agreed to admit 4,500 Polish veterans stranded in the U.K., as well as 40,000 war brides and their children from England and the Netherlands. "This starts to get federal immigration officials thinking about what type of early postwar immigrant and refugee desirability looks like," says Jan Raska, a historian with the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, the primary entry point for nearly one million immigrants and refugees during the Second World War.

King, a political shape-shifter, set in motion changes that opened the door to a four-decade-long conversation about who gets to come here and why. King surely didn't see it that way. In an oft-quoted 1947 speech, he affirmed "the view that the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass immigration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population." That character, he said, didn't include "large-scale immigration from the Orient."

Besides the head tax and the restrictions on family reunification, the government used hard caps to limit immigration from South Asia. In the 1940s and '50s, says Ihsan, "there was a quota in place whereby 150 Indians could come over, 100 Pakistanis could come over, and 50 people from Ceylon [modern-day Sri Lanka]."

King was keenly aware that the U.S. and the United Nations wanted Canada to do more to alleviate Europe's insoluble refugee crisis, which stranded millions of displaced persons (DPs) and Jewish Holocaust survivors. Canada, moreover, had committed heavily to the creation of the UN and had little choice but to pay attention or face accusations of hypocrisy. Pressure was coming from inside the country, too. "The doors of Canada must be opened to the homeless and the helpless," David Croll, a Toronto MP with a large Jewish constituency, was quoted as saying in the *Globe and Mail* in 1946.

While Allied powers initially wanted to send DPs back to their homes, British officials began considering importing refugees to relieve

MATTHEW SCHELLENBERG

labour shortages, an idea that soon alighted in Ottawa. King appointed a Manitoba MP, James Glen, as minister of immigration and established a parliamentary committee. The Liberal caucus was sharply divided, but King argued that Canada's population needed to grow to a level he described as its "absorptive capacity."

The prime minister also did something unexpected. After lobbying by a pan-Canadian network of Chinese organizations and churches (the Committee for the Repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act), King in May 1947 signalled his intention to repeal the discriminatory 1923 Chinese Immigration Act, which he once described as a "mistake." He also promised to loosen restrictions on family members who Chinese residents could sponsor to come to Canada. China, after all, had been a wartime ally and our army included about 500 Chinese-Canadian soldiers.

Those new measures found their way into law. However, limits on Chinese immigration, and from other regions in the Global South, lived on in bureaucratic processes embedded in federal regulations, allowing officials to exclude applicants based on "peculiar customs, habits, modes of life or methods of holding property [and] unsuitability having regard to the climatic, economic, social, industrial, educational, labour, health, or other conditions, or requirements existing, temporarily or otherwise."

Between 1947 and 1952, Canada took in more than 186,000 DPs from war-ravaged Central and Eastern Europe, with many selected specifically for sought-after technical skills. Yet, Jewish DPs, as the late historian Irving Abella writes in *None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe 1933-1948*, were "a case apart." The government, under pressure from Jewish aid groups, concocted largely symbolic programs geared at orphan DPs or those in the needle trades. But the ghosts of Canada's prewar antisemitism lingered, with Jews, who made up 30 per cent of all of Europe's refugees, accounting for just 15 per cent of DPs admitted to Canada in 1948.

"My parents ... spent four years in a concentration camp," recalled former Supreme Court justice Rosalie Silberman Abella — wife of Irving Abella and the first Jewish woman and the first refugee to be appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada — in a 1998 speech marking the 70th anniversary of Pier 21. "After years of trying to get into Canada, we finally got permission. In May of 1950, my parents, my grandmother, my younger sister and I found ourselves on an American troop ship, the [USS *General Stuart Heintzelman*], headed for Halifax. We landed at Pier 21, immediately got on what my mother remembers as a soot-filled train headed for Toronto, and started our lives all over again."

In recent years, University of Toronto historian and doctoral candidate Catherine Grant-Wata has interviewed 30 older women from Jamaica who moved to Canada and the U.K. in between the 1950s and '70s, many initially as "domestics," part of a 1955 federal program geared at bringing in nannies and housekeepers — and later, nurses and teachers — from the "West Indies."

Immigration officers spoke about these "coloured" newcomers in racist terms, citing tropes about work ethic

Ottawa's motives were hardly open-minded. There was a demand for Black domestics, fuelled in part by the fact that affluent families were having more difficulty in the postwar years hiring European housekeepers, says Natasha Henry-Dixon, an assistant professor of history at Toronto's York University and president of the Ontario Black History Society. "To fill that gap, the government was looking to other places in the British Commonwealth and so drew on women from the Caribbean," she says

Immigration officials spoke openly about these "coloured" newcomers in racist terms, citing tropes about work ethic and their inability to adapt to a cold climate. Some also feared an influx of Black immigrants would bring the race tensions then flaring in the U.S. to Canadian cities. As with South Asians, the department imposed annual quotas.

As the Caribbean islands attained independence

Limits on immigration from China and the Global South lived on in bureaucratic processes that allowed officials to exclude individuals based on "peculiar customs, habits and modes of life"

from Britain in the early 1960s, diplomats from those emerging post-colonial nations sought not only to build links with Canada to promote investment, tourism and foreign aid but also to manage the growing desire among many of their residents to leave. "They were fleeing the conditions of home, the legacy of slavery," says Henry-Dixon.

As the West Indies domestics program expanded, the federal Liberals, now led by Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, found themselves buffeted by another seismic international event: the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, which began in October, and the subsequent exodus of tens of thousands of people fleeing Communism. The uprising made headlines globally as the revolutionaries became a cause célèbre. As with the postwar DPs, the federal government's initial response was to throttle any pressure to admit large numbers of refugees stranded in Vienna. However, something about this revolution caught the imagination of many Canadians, who began organizing to provide relief as well as offers of sponsorship and jobs.

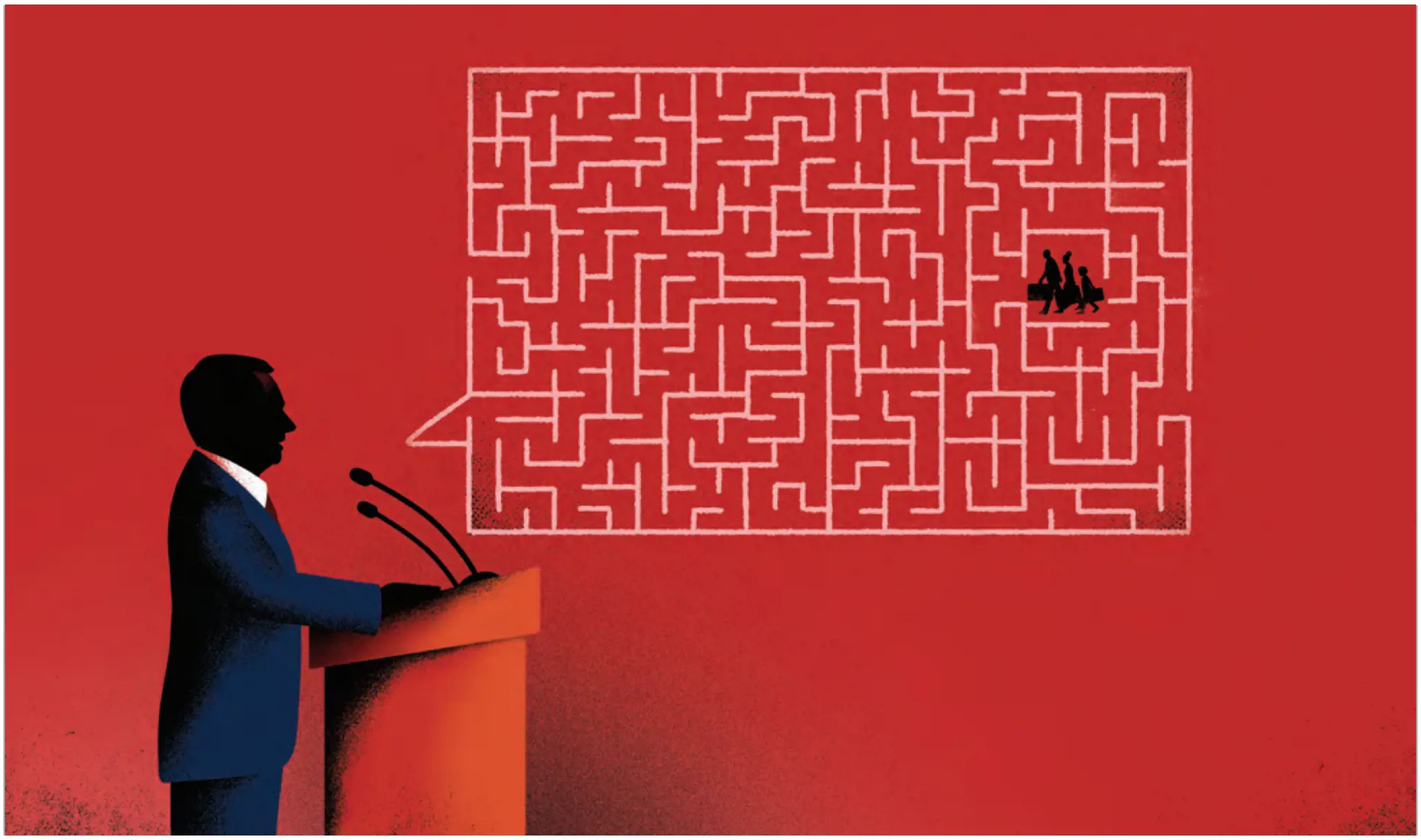
Within weeks, Canada's policy response pivoted. It included dispatching Canadian ships and planes to bring over refugees, who were greeted by cheering crowds in Halifax and Montreal. More Hungarians ended up in Canada than in any other country. And while there were pockets of dissent — some Second World War veterans objected because Hungary had been allied with Hitler — the sky did not fall. The fact that these newcomers were white and European made them much more palatable in a still sparsely populated country that continued to nurse hang-ups about race.

Ellen Fairclough was an unlikely pioneer. A bookkeeper from Hamilton, she got involved in Conservative Party politics after the war and won a 1950 federal by-election. When John Diefenbaker defeated St. Laurent's Liberals in 1957, he named her secretary of state, the first woman to serve in cabinet. The following year, the prime minister offered up a promotion: minister of immigration and citizenship.

Fairclough quickly began hearing from ethnocultural groups about the problems they were encountering with Canada's restrictive immigration rules. One organization was particularly outspoken: "We are still not on equal footing with European immigrants," W.C. Wong, the new president of the Chinese Canadian Community Centre of Ontario, told Diefenbaker and Fairclough at a banquet. The group dispatched a delegation to meet Diefenbaker to press for changes to the law that weren't made in 1947 when King repealed the Chinese Immigration Act.

Fairclough pitched the prime minister on convening a royal commission on citizenship and immigration, which he rejected. Undaunted, she proposed removing, once and for all, the racial categories embedded in the Immigration Act — a reform adopted in February 1962. That move, as well as another Diefenbaker directive — to peg annual immigration levels to one per cent of the population — represented a clear policy break from the past and opened the door to far more immigration from Asia, Latin America and Africa than ever before. Fairclough, says Raska, should be given "her proper due for beginning to take geographic and racial restrictions out of federal immigration policy."

Diefenbaker's government, however, was



short-lived, losing a general election in 1963 to Lester B. Pearson's Liberals. In October 1966, the Quebec trade union leader, Jean Marchand, the Liberals' minister for manpower and immigration, released a white paper on immigration. "There is a general consensus among Canadians," begins the 35-page document, "that the present Immigration Act no longer serves national needs adequately, but there is no consensus on the remedy." No one disagrees that Canada needs immigrants, it continued. "The question is what number and what kind of immigrants should be sought in the years ahead, and from what sources."

The white paper surveyed the arguments orbiting immigration — the justifications (economic prosperity, population growth, a skilled labour force, humanitarian obligations) and also an acknowledgment that Ottawa's vetting system still favoured applicants from Europe and the U.S. It cited touchier questions, such as the practice of landed immigrants sponsoring non-dependent family members who may not have desirable skills, as well as "cultural and social issues": Could newcomers from what was then known as the Third World adapt, or would they lapse into criminality or remain stuck in ethnic enclaves, increasing welfare costs?

Finally, the white paper proposed crisp immigrant categories, including definitions for which family members were eligible to be sponsored, the types of people who would be kept out (such as pimps and those deemed "mentally or physically defective") and the importance of ensuring that formal applications are submitted outside our borders.

By the late 1960s, the new prime minister, Pierre Trudeau, sought to put a more, well, liberal stamp on Canada's immigration rules, establishing the points system whereby applicants are scored against a set of objective criteria, loosening the rules around applications made by people who'd come as tourists and leaning heavily into refugee admissions.

Which were rising quickly. The 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia brought thousands of refugee claimants to Canada, as did Pakistan's violent 1971 attack on the newly independent Bangladesh. In 1972, when Ugandan dictator Idi Amin threatened to slaughter his country's Ismaili community, Ottawa expedited the admission of almost 7,000 refugees — an influx that helped ignite the anti-South Asian backlash in the mid-1970s and put the Liberals on notice that not everyone was on board with their progressive approach. What's more, the government's humanitarian efforts were tempered by geopolitics,

observes Raska, who says Canada hesitated before admitting thousands of left-leaning Chilean refugees for fear of antagonizing the U.S., which had backed a right-wing coup in 1973.

Despite Trudeau's reforms, federal officials continued to put their thumbs on the scale, using such bureaucratic workarounds as bolstering the number of immigration officers in desirable places — think London — while limiting them in less-desirable locales, like India. Even the nine-point assessment system allowed immigration officers to impose their biases because the scoring rubric relied on human judgment. "They left in a tiny mechanism [couched under the term 'personal suitability'] where, if an officer didn't buy your story, didn't like you for some reason, didn't think you'd be a good fit, they wouldn't give you those points," says Raska.

In 1974, the Liberals took a second run at overhauling federal policy, but this time with a far more comprehensive assessment and a deadline: an updated Immigration Act, to be presented in 1976. The minister, Montreal businessman Robert Andras, released a four-volume green paper that added new policy goals to the mix, including the need to find French-speaking immigrants to confront Quebec's stagnating birth rate. Yet, the green paper faced sharp criticism from groups that accused the government of an anti-immigrant bias.

When Andras presented his new legislation (which came into effect in 1978), it marked "a significant shift," according to the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 — a departure from the ad hoc policy-making that had prevailed since the late 1940s. The law defined refugees as a distinct category of immigrant and formally gave the minister responsibility for planning, which included setting an annual target — a management tool that remains in place to this day.

Stung by reports of anti-immigrant violence, the Liberals set the number low. For the balance of the 1970s and early '80s, Canadian immigration dropped steadily, except during the Vietnamese boat people crisis in 1979 and 1980, when Joe Clark's minority Tory government greenlighted emergency admissions of almost 100,000 refugees. When Brian Mulroney came to power in 1984, his Progressive Conservative government largely left Andras's law in place, adding only a new class — immigrant entrepreneurs with large sums of capital to invest — to take advantage of the growing ranks of émigrés from Hong Kong. Yet, in response to public outcry about boatloads of Tamil and Sikh asylum seekers landing on the East Coast, the Tories

> **“Butter chicken, chicken tikka masala, these things that were seen as foreign, a decade later, they’re not so foreign anymore. Heck, they even taste good”**

tightened up the refugee admission processes, accepting only claims made from abroad.

The growing ranks of newcomers — increasingly non-white, from the Global South — found themselves settling in a cold country that hadn’t shed its old prejudices. Professionals like engineers and doctors, admitted on the strength of their training, encountered barred doors. Housing was another headache. “Arrivals from the Caribbean [were] being turned away from renting apartments,” says Henry-Dixon.

Some experienced enduring disappointment, among them a cohort of South Asian-trained physicians who found residencies and medical practices in small towns in Atlantic Canada in the 1960s and ’70s. Though they were able to pursue their careers, many never managed to integrate into their communities.

The merchants on Gerrard Street’s Little India took a more proactive approach to narrowing the cultural divide. Local business leaders created a task force to report incidents, then pushed the Toronto police to hire more non-white cops to patrol their area. They also reached out to media organizations and invited journalists to spend time in their restaurants and homes to demonstrate that they weren’t dirty places, contrary to the innuendo.

Plus, white Canadians got familiar with them, says Ihsan. “Food that used to smell didn’t smell so bad anymore. Butter chicken, chicken tikka masala, all these sorts of things that were first seen as foreign, a decade later, they’re not that foreign anymore. Heck, they even taste good.”

Ujjal Dosanjh has a telling story about his early experiences in politics. He first ran for the provincial legislature in 1979 as an NDP candidate, lost, then ran again in 1983, also unsuccessfully. “I would knock on doors,” he recounts, “and sometimes, people would open the door, look at me and just shut it without even saying hello. When I ran again in the ’91 election, no doors were shut in my face. I [could] see some level of acceptability.”

He attributes the shift in attitudes to the election, in the interim, of Moe Sihota, B.C.’s first South Asian member of the legislative assembly. Something else happened in those years; the Mulroney government more than doubled its annual immigration target, pushing it north of 250,000 newcomers a year, well above the Trudeau era. Overwhelmingly, these newest waves of immigrants settled in the suburbs around Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton.

Given the country’s historical ambivalence toward non-white newcomers, it’s tempting to conclude that such a sharp pivot — Mulroney justified the move in terms of the need for more labour — might have ignited another backlash. However, precisely the opposite occurred.

For decades, the proportion of Canadians who felt there were too many immigrants had far exceeded those who thought there weren’t enough, according to years of longitudinal social surveys conducted by the Environics Institute. Through the 1990s, though, when Canada stuck to the 250,000 level set by Mulroney, those attitudes flipped abruptly, with a steep spike in the number of people who disagreed that Canada had too many immigrants.

The explanation is elusive, but it’s not simply a matter of the country having reached a demographic tipping point, says Environics Institute executive director Andrew Parkin. “The views of non-immigrants shifted, [and] immigrants don’t tend to have different opinions than non-immigrants on these questions.”

“It’s hard to measure the impact of these things,” Dosanjh says of the Environics surveys. “It’s very difficult to extrapolate event versus attitude. But it happened, right?” CH

FEATURE

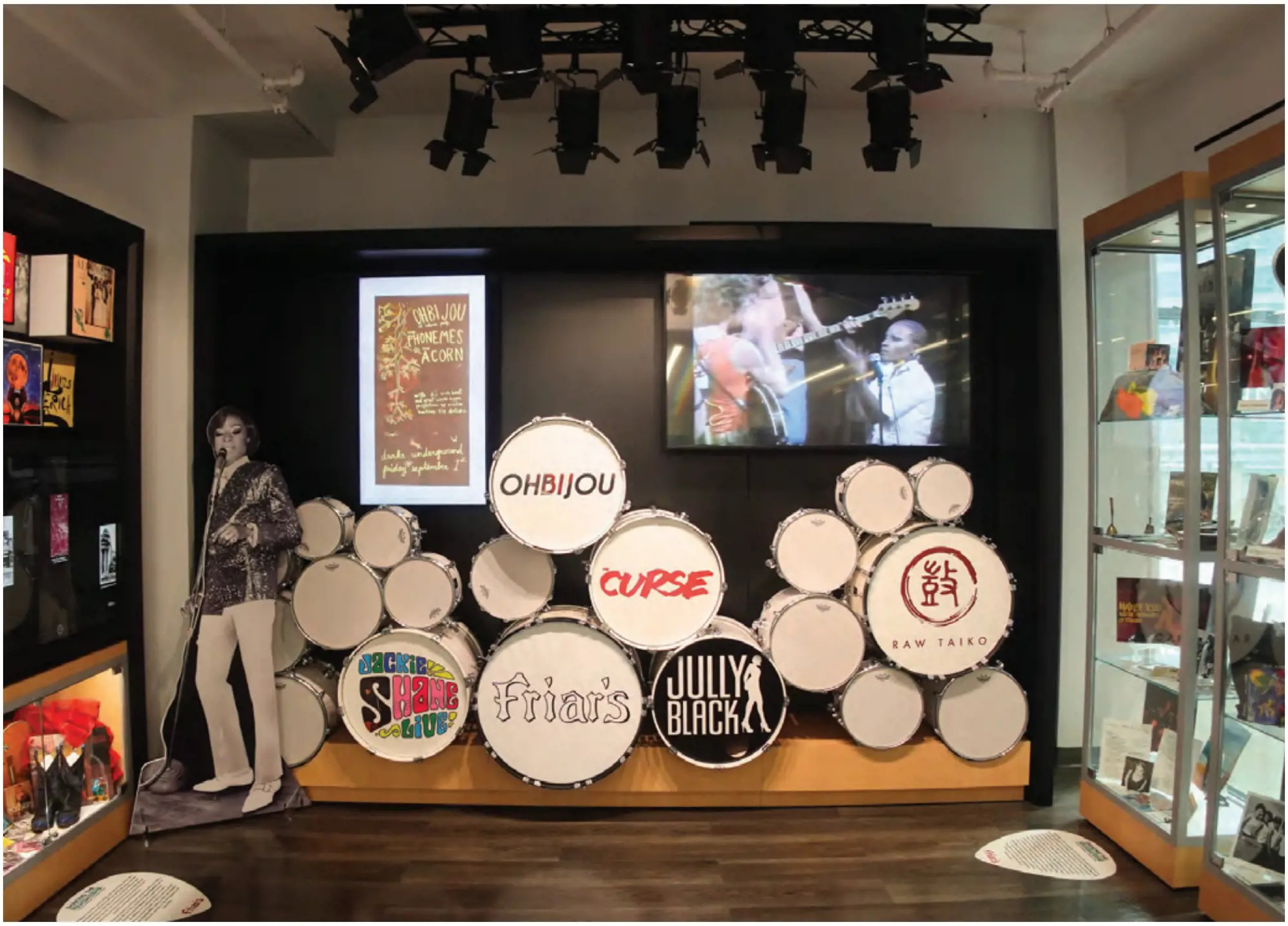
STRANGER THINGS

Canada is home to some weird and wonderful museums for everyone to explore

By Lisa van de Geyn

George Devlin, the former owner of Miniature World, peeks at the peaks and parapets in its *Valley of Castles* exhibit in Victoria

MINIATURE WORLD



A life-size Jackie Shane cutout grooves beside music memorabilia at Friar's Music Museum

If you live in Toronto and didn't know there's a hidden museum on the second floor of the Shoppers Drug Mart near the legendary corner of Yonge and Dundas, take heart — you're not the only one.

The 144-square-foot Friar's Music Museum is filled with rare photos, album covers, stage clothing, concert flyers, autographs, instruments and interactive screens that celebrate Yonge Street's musical culture and artists who've made a mark on Toronto's music scene — and, in some cases, the international stage. Oscar Peterson, Ronnie Hawkins, Glenn Gould, Carole Pope, Jully Black and The Band are just some of the talented Canadians the museum has featured since its inception.

The good news for Canadian-music aficionados is that the curators recently announced they were granted charitable status and plan to open a bigger, more permanent location in 2029, giving fans a deeper dive into Toronto's storied musical history. (In the meantime, if you haven't had the chance to experience the seven-year-old museum at its current location, plan a visit!)

This spot is just one of many quirky museums across the country that lure residents and tourists with the promise of seeing something unusual, learning something fascinating and experiencing something your typical museum doesn't offer. (No dinosaur bones here, folks, but cool artifacts, nonetheless.) Whether you stop at Victoria's Miniature World out West or the Canadian Glove Museum in Point Leamington, N.L., Down East, you'll find educational and entertaining exhibits of all types from coast to coast. Here are nine we're adding to our must-visit list.

FRIAR'S MUSIC MUSEUM

Miniature World

649 Humboldt St. (inside the Fairmont Empress hotel), Victoria, British Columbia

Dubbed "the Greatest Little Show on Earth," Miniature World is one of Victoria's most popular attractions, and for good reason — this place takes you back to your childhood, and it turns out stories told in dioramas are just as fun today as they were back then. For more than 50 years, millions of tourists and visitors have passed through to take in 85 exhibits featuring wee wonders — intricately designed (occasionally animated) dioramas depicting tales of fact, fiction and the fantastical. The phrase "attention to detail" will take on a whole new meaning when you see these impeccably created scenes. While it's bigger than most people expect (that is, there's just so much to see, it can take an hour or two to stroll through), you should still prepare to feel like Paul Bunyan.

Don't miss: Check out the Great Canadian Railway, one of the world's largest model railways; the Wonderful World of the Circus, which celebrates the nostalgia and wonderment under the big top; and two of the biggest dollhouses (circa 1880) ever built, featuring more than 50 beautifully furnished rooms. *miniatureworld.com*

TOP: MINIATURE WORLD. BOTTOM: GOPHER HOLE MUSEUM

World Famous Gopher Hole Museum

208 First St. S., Torrington, Alberta

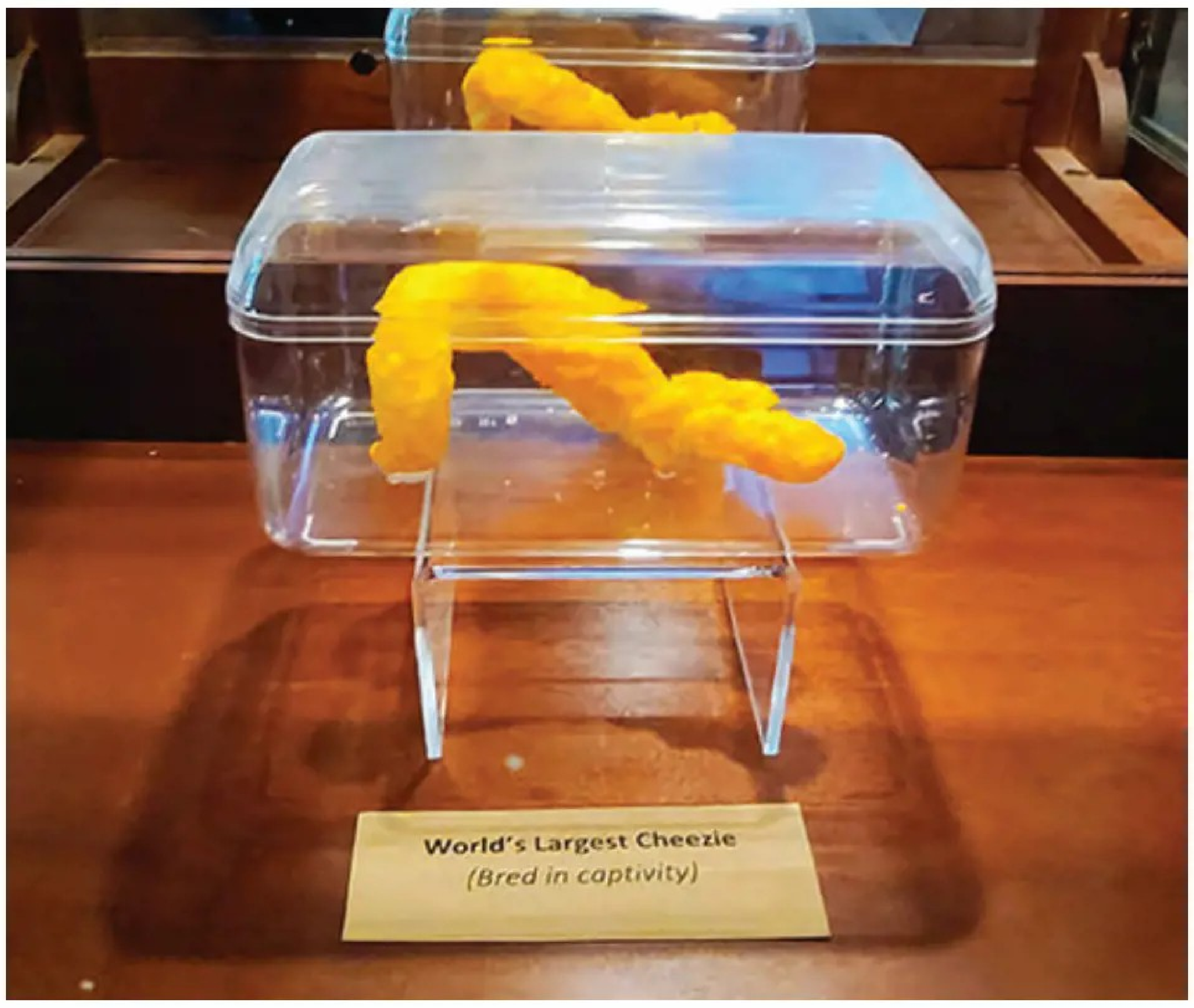
Even Travel Alberta calls this volunteer-run museum "strange-but-true," so you're not alone if you're wondering why Canada has a space dedicated to gophers. Actually, the 82 taxidermied models you'll find in the 48 vignettes throughout the attraction are Richardson's ground squirrels, not gophers. Still, gophers or not, the museum (which opened in 1996 about 160 kilometres northeast of Calgary) has lots to see. The mission behind the museum (admission is by donation) is to not only "provide an entertaining and educational experience for all visitors" by promoting curiosity, humour and creativity but also to foster an appreciation for prairie biodiversity, ecosystems and the province's farming industry.

Don't miss: If you, er, like rodents, you'll get a kick out of seeing these creatures in a slew of roles and situations in funny diorama-style scenes; make sure you check out the ones chilling at the rodent hair salon, working at the Torrington Fertilizer Plant, attending a music jamboree and hunting and fishing. Take the guided tour so you can hear the stories behind the kooky displays, and consider picking up a gopher-themed souvenir at the gift shop. *gopherholemuseum.org*

Glitchy's Oddities

510 33rd St. W., Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Opened in 2018 inside Glitch Gifts and Novelties — a locally owned store filled with novelty items, retro goods and a bunch of knick-knacks — is Glitchy's Oddities, the city's only museum of its kind. The owners say it was inspired by "dime-store museums and whimsical roadside attractions," and their collection is a neat mix of fact and fiction. What will you see? Where do we start?! If it's ridiculous or spooky, it's probably there. (Oh, and admission is free.)
Don't miss: The World's Largest Cheezie; a super-creepy ventriloquist doll; a famous two-headed calf; a mummified mermaid; a cast of a sasquatch track found in British Columbia; and Sophie, a haunted doll kept encased and restrained due to the very eerie and totally unexplained occurrences on-site since her arrival. *glitchys.ca*



Glitchy's collection is a neat mix of fact and fiction. If it's ridiculous or spooky, it's probably there

The Museum of Health Care at Kingston

32 George St., Kingston, Ontario

Most Canadians have much to say about the current state of our health-care system, but looking back at our medical history is also a fascinating endeavour. Located in the Ann Baillie Building National Historic Site, which was built in the early 1900s to house student nurses, the museum collects artifacts that help preserve our country's medical past. Nine permanent exhibits teach visitors about medical innovations from the 1800s to present day. Of course, there's more to this place than captivating displays — special events aimed at making health care more engaging for all ages (like the Teddy Bear Hospital) are often on the docket.
Don't miss: A doctor's treatment room circa 1930 is a popular exhibit; it's modelled after the offices of two general practitioners in nearby Gananoque and focuses on medical treatments from back in the day, as well as the role electricity and X-rays were starting to play in health care. Do take a look at the rare 1900s static generator on-site — machines like this were used for electrotherapy, which treated such ailments as gout, neuromuscular dysfunction and rheumatoid arthritis. Tip: If you're a nervous dental patient, it's probably best to skip the *Tooth Be Told* exhibit, which showcases how dental procedures have changed through time. *museumofhealthcare.ca*

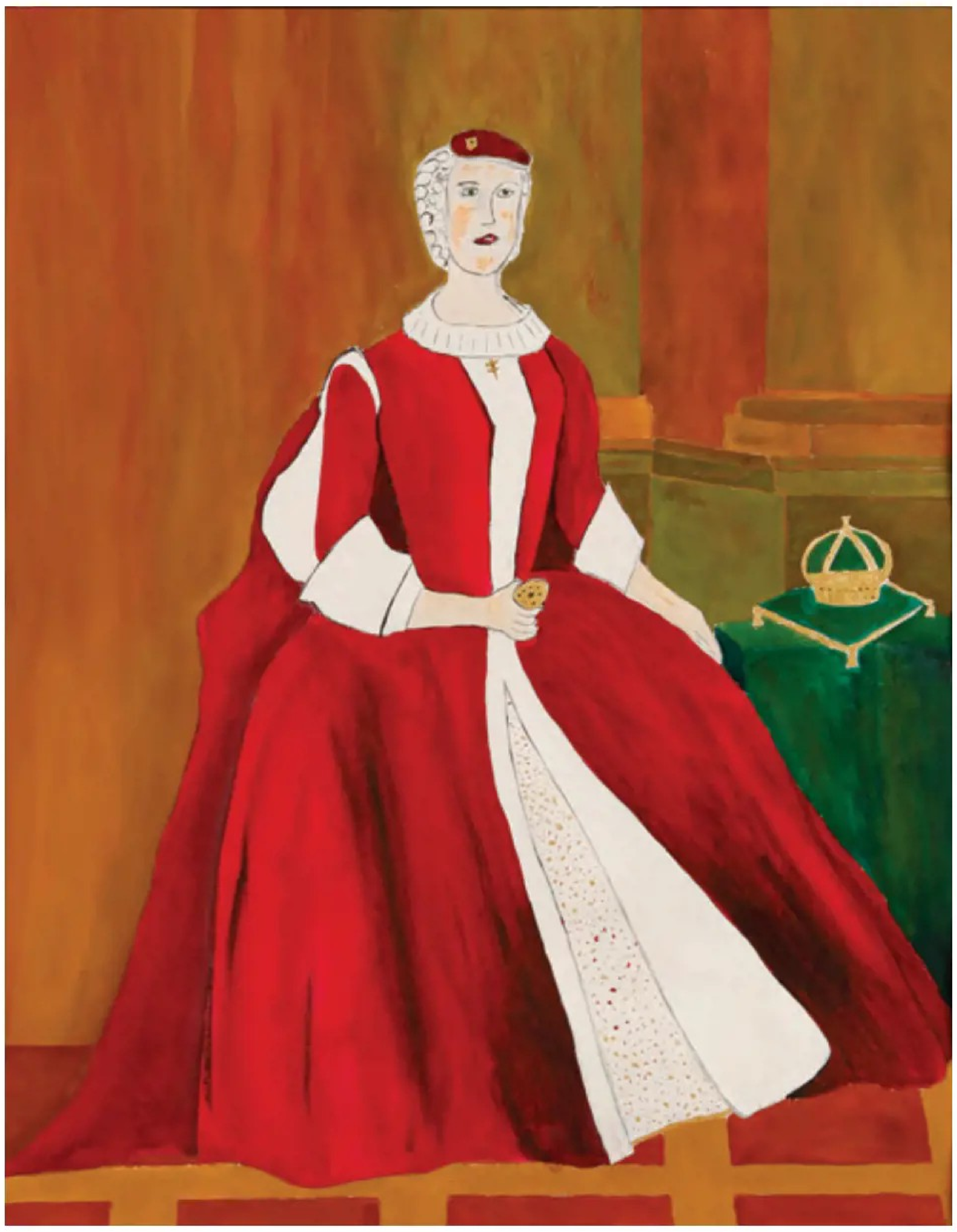
TOP: GLITCHY'S; BOTTOM: FROM THE MUSEUM OF HEALTH CARE, CANADA, USED WITH PERMISSION

The Museum Of Bad Art exhibit at Exmuro

27 rue Notre-Dame, Quebec City, Quebec

Those who live and work in Quebec City are no strangers to Exmuro, which started in 2007 as a project to take art pieces out of galleries and feature them in public spaces. Exmuro moved to its current location in Place Royale in 2022, and it's now home to an unusual permanent exhibit — *The Museum Of Bad Art*, which "brings together the best of art that is just too bad to be ignored." Found at garage sales, thrift stores and flea markets and in Dumpsters and attics, these pieces were meant to be serious and sincere but missed the mark. (If we're being honest, much of the work is better than we could create.) Curators have included interpretations of each piece, but as with any work of art, you're free to engage with the paintings and make your best guess when it comes to what the artist was trying to convey. *Bonne chance!*

Don't miss: *Queen of the Chocolate Chip* (watercolour on paper) was acquired at a yard sale in Massachusetts (Exmuro has a partnership with the Museum of Bad Art Boston) in 1994. Likely inspired by an 18th-century painting, this one features Her Majesty "caught mid-chew, as she sports a jaunty beret." *Captains of Industry* (oil on canvas) features Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, complete with a family of sparrows living in Ford's hat, which sits on a table; the car mogul instead dons a light bulb for headwear. *exmuro.com*



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POTATOES

TOP: EXMURO/MUSEUM OF BAD ART. BOTTOM: CANADIAN POTATO MUSEUM

The Canadian Potato Museum

1 Dewar Lane, O'Leary, Prince Edward Island

Prince Edward Island farmers grow about 100 different types of spuds, and we probably wouldn't know that nugget of info without the province's famed Canadian Potato Museum, which celebrates all things taters. You'll learn a ton of agricultural history, see the world's largest exhibit of potato-farming machinery and find out why the potato industry — and all the baked, mashed, scalloped and fried deliciousness it brings to the world — is so important to the province. Turns out the potato is more than just a humble tuber, after all.

Don't miss: Visit the on-site restaurant, the P.E.I. Potato Country Kitchen, and indulge in Fries With the Works — hamburger, peas and gravy, the way the Islanders do. And be sure to get a photo with the world's largest potato sculpture at the museum's entrance — there's no way to overlook this giant spud. *canadianpotatomuseum.com*

The Canadian Glove Museum

268 Main St., Point Leamington, Newfoundland and Labrador

You read that right. The Canadian Glove Museum, which sits on the shore of Notre Dame Bay, celebrates the world of gloves and glove-making, shedding light on the history of the industry and the innovations it has seen over the past century. Visitors can get up close and personal with the museum's impressive collection of gloves worn by some of the world's most famous celebs (think Elvis Presley, Audrey Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe). Those interested in the craft can also enjoy a 30-minute behind-the-scenes tour of Superior Glove, the largest glove-manufacturing plant in Canada. (The Canadian company has been a leader in the design of safety gloves and sleeves since 1910.)

Don't miss: The hands-on (pun intended) exhibits include interactive activities such as the Mini-Dipped Glove, which allows visitors to make their own tiny glove, and Magic Yarn Disappearing, featuring the science and innovation behind the materials used in glove-making. Don't leave without signing a fabric handprint — they're sewn into the museum's wall, creating a work of art that celebrates its guests. Admission is free.
thecanadianglovemuseum.com

Atlantic Salmon Museum

263 Main St., Doaktown, New Brunswick

With views of the Miramichi River, the Atlantic Salmon Museum opened more than 40 years ago as a nod to the role Atlantic salmon (a.k.a. the King of Fish) play in New Brunswick's history and culture. Three galleries (one on the main floor, two on the lower level) display salmon memorabilia and artifacts that celebrate the impact the fish made in the area. Case in point: The newest exhibit, *The Golden Age of Salmon Fishing on the Miramichi*, looks at the interest in recreational salmon fishing that started just before the turn of the 20th century. The Hall of Fame fetes the achievements of more than 200 anglers and fly tyers who've been inducted over the years, and the Reading Room is the perfect spot to sit back and explore more about this famous fish at your leisure.

Don't miss: The John Keith-King Collection was donated to the museum nearly a decade ago and consists of fly plates, fishing rods, fish replicas, fishing tackle, antique outboard motors and stainless-steel mesh sculptures of sockeye salmon to fascinate anglers. *atlanticsalmonmuseum.com*

TOP: CANADIAN GLOVE MUSEUM. BOTTOM: ATLANTIC SALMON MUSEUM

Neon Sign Museum

104 Street N.W. and 104 Ave.,
Edmonton, Alberta

The first of its kind in Canada, the Neon Sign Museum is a labour of love for volunteers from the City of Edmonton's heritage planning department; the team has spent countless hours collecting neon signs that used to hang from old or demolished buildings and having them restored to their former glory. Outdoors and open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the museum is the perfect place for artists and business owners to showcase the iconic signs that played a role in the city's history. There are currently more than a dozen signs to view (the city has a goal of featuring 30), and each one has a plaque to tell its story. **Don't miss:** The drugstore sign, put up on Darling's Drug Store almost a century ago, was the first neon sign in Edmonton. Mike's News is another sign with a unique history. An institution in the city from 1912 to 1986, the newsstand was owned by John "Mike" Michaels, who emigrated from New York and first sold newspapers via horse. *edmonton.ca* CH

The Neon Sign Museum is a brightly lit labour of love

BEE-BELL
HEALTH BAKERY
CANADIAN
FURNITURE
W.W. ARCAND
CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS
FREIGHT
TELEGRAMS
Admiral
APPLIANCES
The Art Store
ACLIFF
AUTO PARTS
W.C. KAY Co
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CONNAUGHT MED
RESEARCH LA RATO
University of Toronto

This vial of poliomyelitis vaccine is from Connaught Medical Research Laboratories. In 1972, the University of Toronto sold Connaught to a Crown corporation; the company was then resold and fully privatized in 1989

FEATURE

Shots Fired

Canada has a legacy of life-saving vaccine innovation and public immunization. That work is at risk of being derailed

By Wendy Haaf

In April 2025, Morgan Birch of Fort Saskatchewan, Alta., was awakened in the middle of the night by her four-month-old daughter screaming.

Baby Kimie had been feverish for about five days — a symptom the infant's health-care providers said was probably a side-effect of the routine immunizations Kimie had received just before getting sick. But that night, a rash had begun to blossom on the baby's torso and she was clearly miserable.

"I was scared," recalls Birch. "At first, doctors thought it was a heat rash from the fever; then, it spread to her face. Her eyes were almost swollen shut and she wasn't eating."

The baby's great-grandmother recognized the illness before lab tests confirmed her diagnosis was correct: Kimie had measles. She wasn't yet protected by immunization since the first routine dose of measles vaccine is usually given at 12 months. "I was shocked," says Birch. "I couldn't understand how she would get measles in 2025."

However, Kimie is among the more than 5,000 Canadians known to have been infected with measles in 2025 as of early October; tragically, that includes two premature infants, one each in Alberta and Ontario, who died after contracting measles in the womb; the latter had other serious medical complications. We've also hit another terrible milestone: Since Jan. 1, 2025, our country has racked up the highest incidence of measles per million population in North America. In late July, the incidence rate of measles in Canada reached approximately 100 cases per million people, compared with an average of 2.2 cases per million between 2015 and 2019. And this is only what has been reported. "We're not capturing them all — not even close," says Dr. Marina Salvadori, a pediatric infectious disease specialist and a senior medical adviser for the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Stats like these would have seemed unthinkable not so long ago because the disease was declared eliminated in Canada in 1998. A contagious disease is considered eliminated if it's almost entirely preventable — typically by vaccination — and "does not circulate in your region for more than 12 months," explains Salvadori. In the case of measles, which is one of the most contagious human diseases ever known, roughly 95 per cent of the population needs to be fully vaccinated to prevent it from spreading to the wider

COURTESY OF SANOFI PASTEUR CANADA ARCHIVES

WHOOPING COUGH
CLINIC

Children at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children's Whooping Cough Clinic in the 1930s

SANOFI PASTEUR CANADA

community if an occasional person gets infected with the illness.

Before routine vaccination against measles began in 1970, the disease was so common that virtually everyone contracted it during childhood. In the pre-vaccination days, Canada saw an average of 54,584 cases per annum; by 1972, the number of cases dropped to just 14 a year. Other childhood diseases saw a similar reduction after routine vaccination was adopted: pertussis (whooping cough) cases dropped 87 per cent; mumps fell by 98 per cent; diphtheria and rubella decreased by more than 99 per cent; and polio came down 100 per cent.

"We've done a great job with vaccines, which are probably second only to clean water, the best and most impactful public health intervention" of all time, notes Dr. Shelly Bolotin, the director of the Centre for Vaccine Preventable Diseases at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

While Canada deserves kudos for its pioneering contributions to vaccine development and for the oft-unsung efforts to get people vaccinated, an incomplete understanding of the history of vaccines and the protection they offer threatens that success.

> **"Young parents are overloaded with information, and lack real context about what each of these diseases means to them and their kids"**

Too successful?

Only a small and shrinking proportion of the population remembers what it was like to live through outbreaks of what were common childhood illnesses. "We now have at least three generations of people who have received a measles vaccine," says Heather MacDougall, PhD, an associate professor emeritus of history at the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ont., and an expert on the history of measles vaccination in Canada.

"Some people think it's not going to happen here or it's not going to happen to my child," says Dr. Manish Sadarangani, the director of the Vaccine Evaluation Center at the BC Children's Hospital Research Institute in Vancouver. That line of thinking is far from new. An April 1946

"Homemaker" column in the *Globe and Mail*, for example, warned against being complacent about the threat of diphtheria, long after the 1930 introduction of routine vaccination. "Don't leave it to other mothers to keep your child safe," the unnamed author cautioned.

Christopher Rutty, PhD, a public health historian and adjunct professor at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health, agrees that vaccines are a victim of their own success. "Young parents are overloaded with information and lack real context about what each of these diseases means to them and their kids, which is why history is so important," he says. Even for those of us old enough to remember a neighbourhood kid dying from measles during our childhood, it's almost impossible to imagine what life was like before most vaccines existed.

How bad was it?

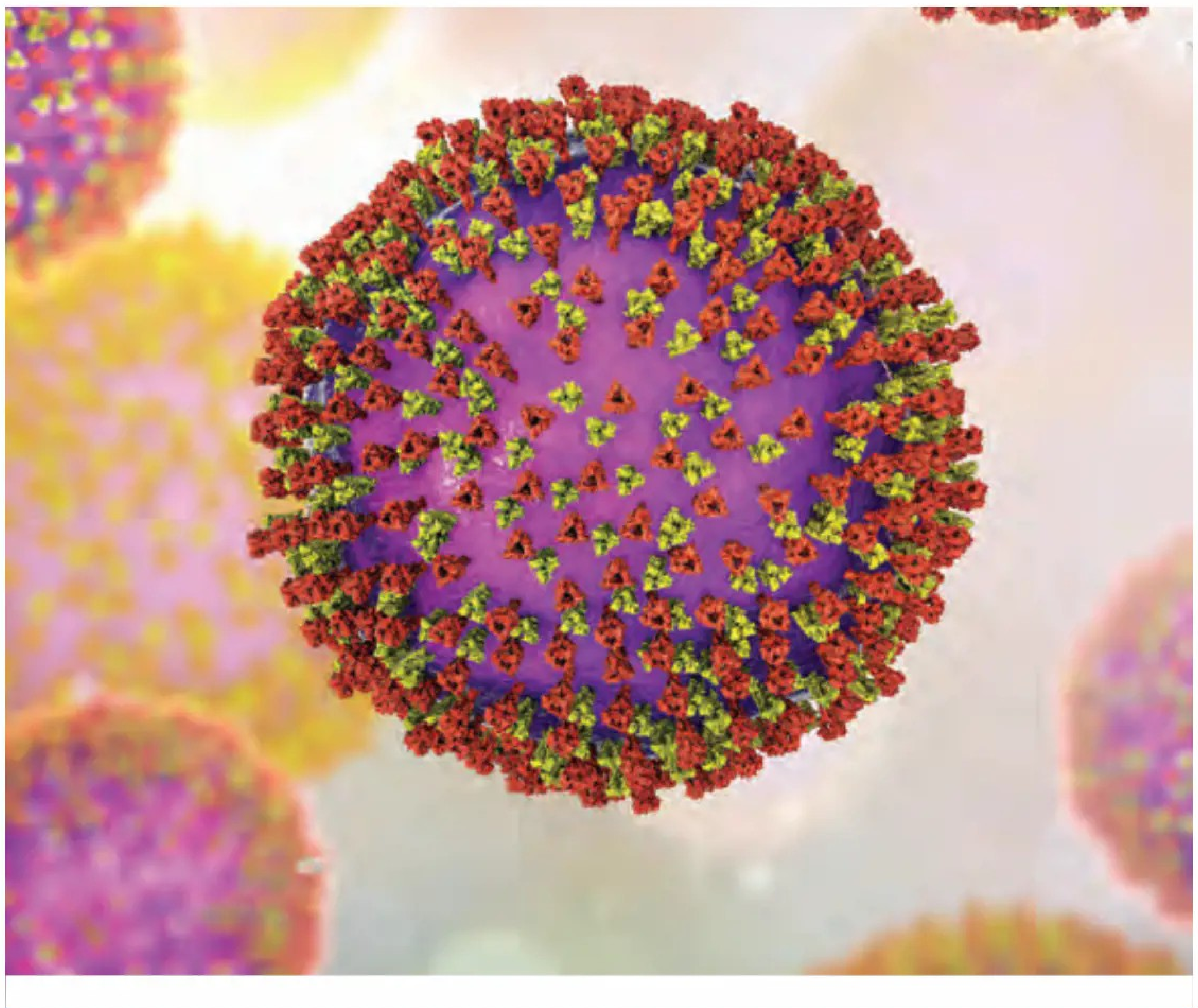
The first vaccine in Canada arrived in 1800 — it was for smallpox. One of the deadliest diseases known to humans, smallpox initially appeared in New France in 1616. Periodic epidemics caused death and devastation for many decades, disproportionately affecting Indigenous communities, which had no natural immunity to this disease brought to North America by settlers. In some of these First Nations communities, more than 75 per cent of the people died from smallpox.

The viral disease started with flu-like symptoms. It then caused rashes and blisters inside the mouth and on the skin that filled with pus and burst. Smallpox typically was fatal in 30 per cent or more cases. It could also cause such serious complications as blindness.

But long before Confederation, variolation — a precursor to vaccination — was used to protect against smallpox, starting in British-held Quebec in 1765. Uptake of variolation, and then smallpox vaccination, was limited and uneven, though some jurisdictions made the latter compulsory, such as the Province of Canada and Prince Edward Island in the 1860s, and Quebec in 1875. But acceptance wasn't uniform.

Movements against vaccination aren't a recent phenomenon. For instance, while variolation was fairly well accepted in what is now Canada, some colonies in pre-Revolutionary America passed laws against the practice. The motivations for that resistance may be familiar: religious freedom and distrust of authority.

ADOBE STOCK

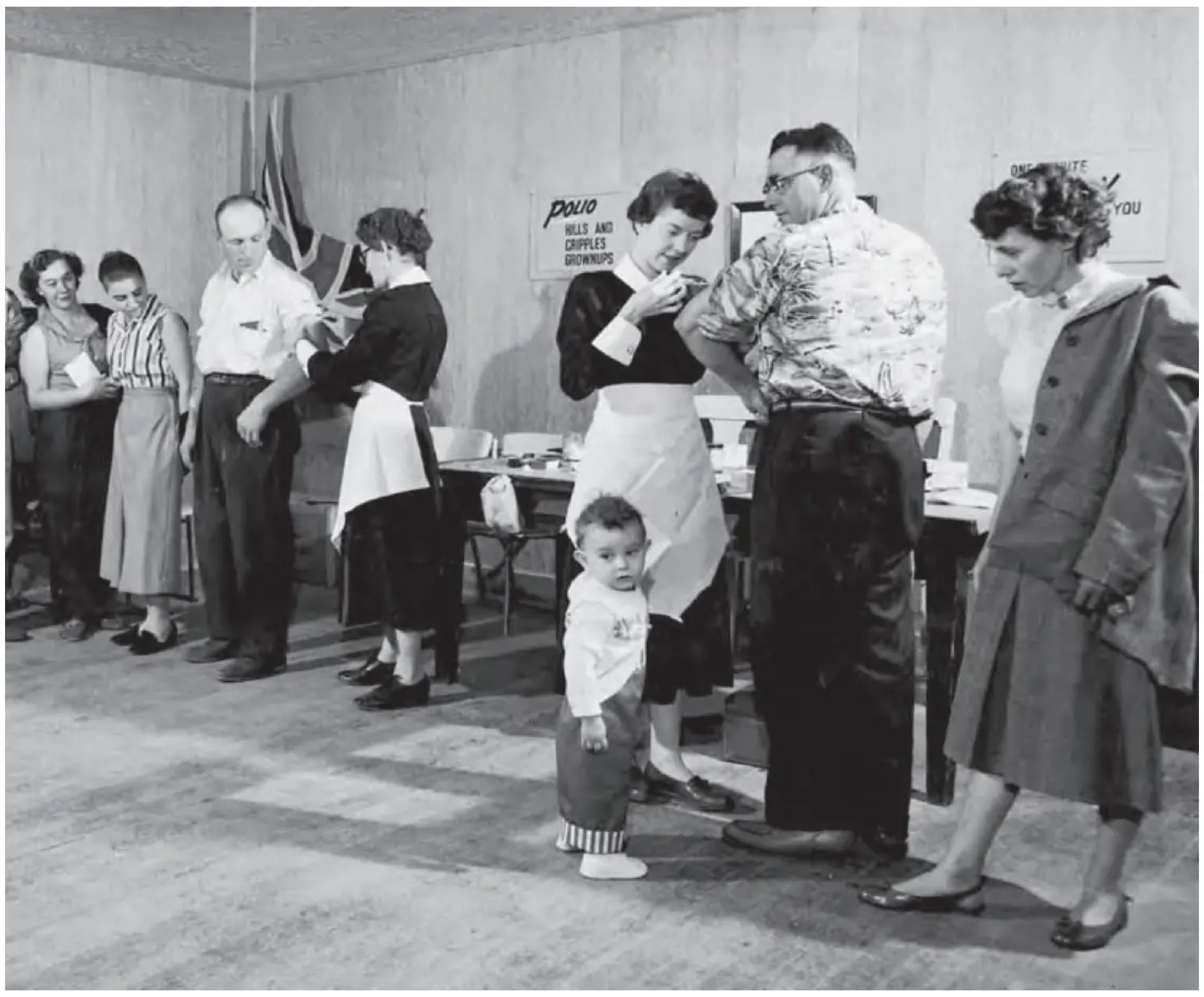


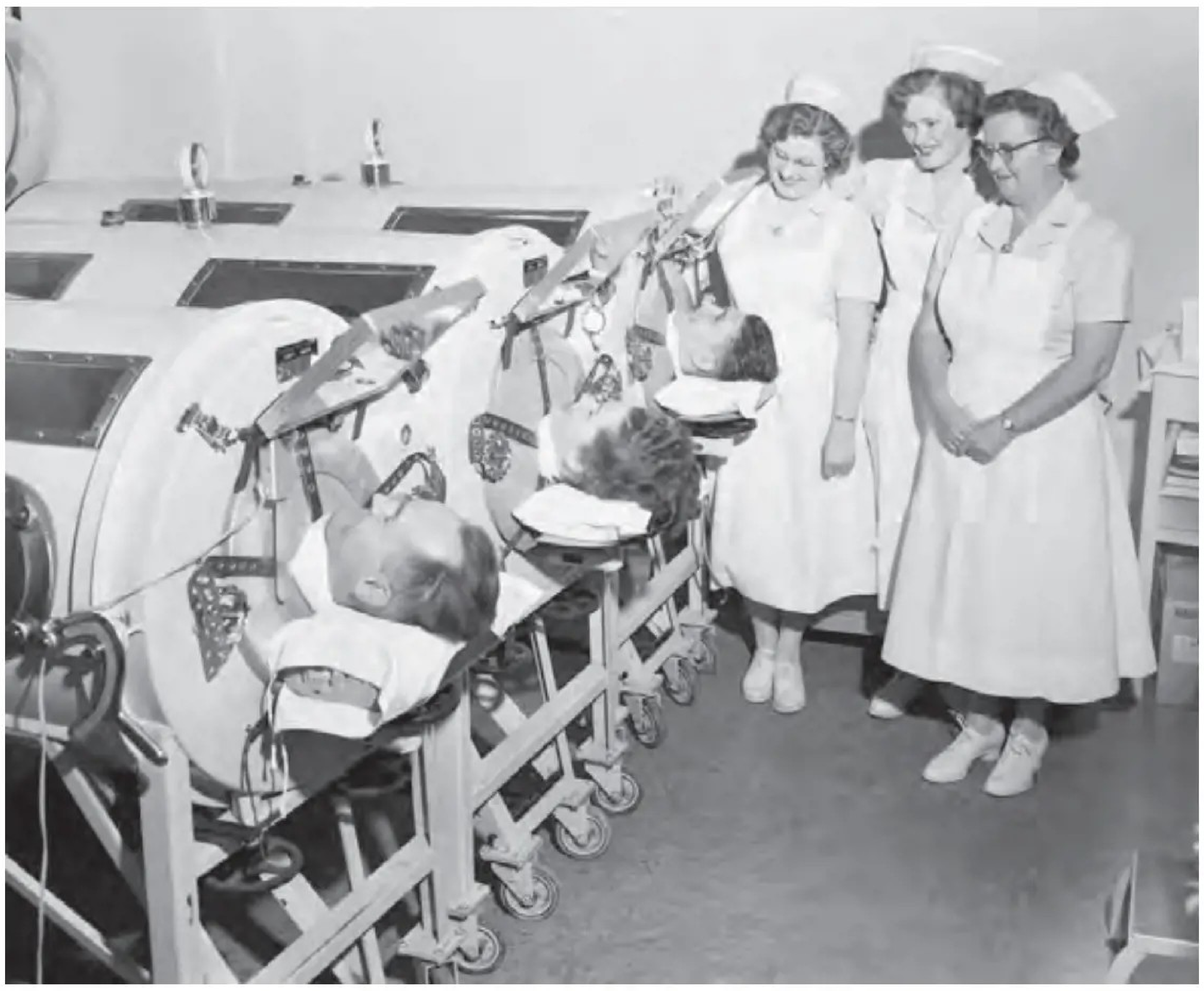
A POTENTIALLY DEVASTATING DISEASE

Even with the best modern medical care, measles can have serious consequences, with children under the age of five disproportionately affected. One impact of the disease is what's called "immune amnesia," where the virus causes a huge dip in your immune system's ability to fight infections. This means that "in the ensuing two to three months, you can get bacterial infections," says Dr. Marina Salvadori, a senior medical adviser for the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Other risks include:

- a one-in-10 chance of ear infection, with the potential for hearing loss;
- one-in-20 odds of pneumonia (the most common cause of measles-related death);
- one case of brain swelling (which can lead to lasting disability) for each 1,000 cases;
- a rare, universally fatal complication called subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE), which can occur seven to 10 years after a child has recovered from measles. SSPE affects between four and 11 of 100,000 infected children, most commonly among those who caught measles before one year of age, and causes dementia-like symptoms before the child tragically dies.





Top: Public health nurses administering vaccinations in Southey, Sask., circa 1960

Above: Polio patients receiving treatment in iron lungs at the now-closed Calgary General Hospital in December 1955

There was also homegrown opposition to mandatory vaccination. By 1885, several factors came together to create the perfect conditions for the disease nicknamed the "speckled monster" to surge in Montreal. Because many anglophone employers pushed for compulsory vaccination, some of the predominantly francophone workforce saw it as a weapon against French Canadians. A tainted batch of vaccine, which caused a suspension of the city's original vaccination program, further undermined trust. With only one in six residents protected by vaccination, the disease rapidly spread after two infected individuals arrived from Chicago. The disease raged through Montreal and the rest of Quebec, infecting 19,905 people (3,154 in Montreal alone) and killing nearly 6,000.

Back in 1900, the leading causes of death overall in the U.S. (and, presumably, in Canada) were pneumonia, tuberculosis, diarrhea and intestinal infections, and diphtheria, which when combined, accounted for one-third of all deaths. And of those who died from these causes, 40 per cent were children younger than five.

At the time, pertussis — the so-called 100-day cough — killed five out of every 1,000 Canadian children ahead of their fifth birthdays, most of them before the age of one. Severe cases could also cause permanent lung damage, hernias, brain damage and blindness. Living through the illness was an ordeal for everyone in the household; whole families had to quarantine for weeks, which could result in lost wages and employment. A December 1934 *Toronto Star* article quoted the parent of an 18-month-old with whooping cough as saying, "Every little while, especially around midnight or two o'clock in the morning, he is ripped and wracked and torn by incredible storms of coughing and pain, and everyone is awake and terrified in the night." Even as late as 1943, roughly 15,000 children per year suffered through whooping cough in Canada.

Up until the mid-1920s, diphtheria — then commonly referred to as "the strangler" — was the leading cause of death in Canadian children. The bacterial infection got its nickname from the thick, grey membrane that forms over the throat and nasal passages, eventually blocking the airways. Stricken families might lose multiple children, as was recounted in a Christmas Day 1901 story in the *Globe and Mail*, with the dateline London, Ont.: "Within a month, Mr. and Mrs. George Constable ... have lost four children by diphtheria."

TOP: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA. BOTTOM: UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY ARCHIVES

From the 1910s until the mid-'50s, outbreaks of polio (also known then as infantile paralysis) occurred relatively regularly, along with periodic epidemics. A wave of large polio epidemics struck Manitoba, then Saskatchewan and Ontario between 1936 and 1937. In the latter year, nearly 4,000 Canadians contracted the disease.

Initially infecting the gastrointestinal tract, poliovirus can sometimes enter the bloodstream and attack motor neurons in the spinal cord, which stops nerve impulses from getting to certain muscles. The result of this: 0.5 per cent of those infected develop weakness, and in some cases, paralysis so severe that the person can't breathe. By 1934, polio was responsible for nearly half of disability cases in Canada. In 1930, the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto acquired the country's first iron lung, a machine that could mechanically inflate the lungs of affected individuals; in 1937, the hospital assembled another 26 of those devices within a six-week period.

"No children played on the city streets," a September 1987 *Toronto Star* story recalls of what life was like in the city at that time. "Healthy children were confined to their backyards and didn't go back to school until Thanksgiving. Sick children languished in bed for six months to a year." A then-60-year-old polio survivor named Henry Ford said in the article that the experience of being sick and unable to see his parents while in hospital was "terrifying."

The worst spate of polio outbreaks took place between 1949 and 1954 — and paralyzed 11,000 Canadians. The disease peaked here in 1953, infecting 9,000 and killing 500. The rate of severe cases was unusually high among young adults, some of whom were pregnant and gave birth while confined to an iron lung.

A record of innovation

In the wake of the devastating 1885 Quebec smallpox outbreak, the Ontario Vaccine Farm in Palmerston, Ont., founded by a local physician, Dr. Alexander Stewart, began producing smallpox vaccine. First, Stewart introduced a relative of the smallpox bacteria into calves. Instruments called "points" were coated with fluid from blisters that formed on the animals' skin. Vaccination was done by scratching a person's skin with a treated point. The Ontario Vaccine Farm sold large quantities of its product to local health boards. Stewart later joined the University of Toronto's department of hygiene, where, in 1913, he began to produce the first made-in-Canada vaccine for treating rabies.

During the First World War, the not-for-profit Antitoxin Laboratory took over Canadian smallpox vaccine production because of increased demand from the military. The lab was established by Toronto physician John G. FitzGerald, who was the first person to produce diphtheria toxoid — a pre-vaccine-era treatment for diphtheria — in Canada. The Antitoxin Laboratory was the forerunner of Connaught Laboratories (later, Connaught Medical Research Laboratories) and the first facility in the country to mass produce a safer version of the vaccine with a longer shelf life.

> **The worst polio outbreaks took place between 1949 and 1954 — and paralyzed 11,000 Canadians**

In 1918, New York City's department of health shared an experimental influenza vaccine with Connaught to help stem the spread of the deadly epidemic sweeping the globe. Connaught operated around the clock to produce a free supply for organizations across Canada, several U.S. states and Great Britain. The following year, Connaught started making the country's first supply of an early pertussis vaccine. In the 1920s, Connaught and Canada made their mark internationally in the fight against diphtheria when the lab's resident diphtheria toxin expert, Dr. Peter Moloney, began preparing a new toxoid based on findings from a researcher at the Pasteur Institute in Paris.

By 1929, large-scale research projects that involved approximately 36,000 children had demonstrated that three doses of toxoid reduced diphtheria incidence by at least 90 per cent. This was "the first statistical demonstration of the value of a non-living vaccine in preventing a specific disease," Christopher Rutty and

Sue C. Sullivan write in *This Is Public Health: A Canadian History*.

According to the Museum of Health Care's online exhibit *Vaccines & Immunization: Epidemics, Prevention & Canadian Innovation*, "diphtheria toxoid was the first modern vaccine, the first paediatric vaccine, and provided the foundation of public health immunization programs in Canada and elsewhere." During the 1940s, Connaught was instrumental in developing combination vaccines that protected against diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus in one shot.

Canada also made key contributions in the development and testing of polio vaccine. "It wouldn't exist without us," says Rutty. A synthetic nutrient base, called Medium 199, created by Connaught scientists led by Drs. Raymond Parker and Joseph Morgan, made it possible to efficiently grow the type of cells needed to produce a vaccine. "With Medium 199, [Jonas] Salk was able to do a human test on his kids, himself and then people who had already had polio," explains Rutty. "That was a major breakthrough."

The next problem was "how to make a hell of a lot of the vaccine," he notes. The answer: an innovation dubbed "the Toronto Method," pioneered a decade earlier by Connaught scientist Dr. Leone Farrell for the pertussis vaccine. "Dr. Farrell adapted that technology to grow poliovirus on a large scale," says Rutty. The technique was so successful that Connaught could provide enough poliovirus fluids to make all of the vaccine used in a landmark 1.8-million-person trial in 1954. By April 1955, the results of that study were in: The vaccine was 60 to 90 per cent effective at protecting against polio infection, depending on the strain of virus.

Since that watershed moment, Canadian scientists have continued to make contributions to inventions often hailed as among humanity's greatest achievements. These innovations include pioneering several combination vaccines that protect against polio and multiple other infections, developing an Ebola vaccine and laying the groundwork for creating the lipid nanoparticles used in some COVID-19 shots.

Why skip the shot?

How could a country that's made such incredible strides in vaccine science and public health end up amid a measles epidemic nearly 30 years after its elimination? For one thing, some health-system issues play a role in delaying or making vaccine access more difficult. COVID-19 restrictions created a backlog of missed and delayed medical appointments that we still haven't caught up with. Our system for delivering childhood vaccines was created when kids got their shots for just six diseases versus today's much more complex schedule. Meanwhile, the most powerful weapon against vaccine hesitancy is a trusted health-care provider, yet one in five Canadians lack a regular family doctor or nurse practitioner.

Then, there's the fact that some communities have legitimate reasons to mistrust the medical establishment and government, which can lead to vaccine hesitancy. For instance, Canada has subjected some Indigenous Peoples to experimentation and procedures without their knowledge or consent. Research trials of a then-controversial tuberculosis vaccine conducted on First Nations infants in Saskatchewan during the 1930s and '40s is just one such example.

Some communities have legitimate reasons to mistrust the medical system

Catherine Carstairs, a professor of history at the University of Guelph, also points to a change in parenting philosophy. "It was based on this idea that the individual health needs of your particular child should be your primary concern," she says. "For example, if my child spikes a fever, what impact could that have?" Since vaccination was so successful at keeping preventable diseases at bay, and most people outside of the medical field are very poor at assessing the magnitude of benefits of vaccination versus possible harms, "it was very easy for parents to focus on what the risks might be of the vaccine," says Carstairs.

Arguably one of the most potent negative influences on vaccine hesitancy, however, is what some experts describe as a crisis of disinformation and misinformation enabled by the internet

COVID-19 MOBILE VACCINE CLIN
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Bundled-up Torontonians stand in line for a COVID-19 vaccination at a mobile clinic on Dec. 19, 2021

CP IMAGES

and social media. While, according to Carstairs, the modern anti-vaccination movement in Canada began in the 1980s, today, the vaccination pushback is much more complex. Wellness influencers and others who peddle products for profit not backed by scientific evidence, podcasters who promote conspiracy theories and politicians who use opposition to vaccination as an ideological flag are just a few sources of anti-vaccine rhetoric.

In a June 2025 CBC Radio interview, Dr. Mark Joffe, Alberta's former chief medical officer of health, pointed to widespread dissemination of dis- and misinformation by such sources as a main driver behind the roughly decade-long decline in childhood vaccination rates. "The population is confused. They're unsure where to get information. They're unsure what to trust," he said. Thanks to Canada's past success in eliminating measles, "[people] don't understand what measles is … so [they] have forgotten about it."

The result? In 2024, only 68 per cent of Alberta's two-year-olds had gotten the necessary two doses of measles, mumps and rubella vaccine.

Experts expect that the current measles outbreak will eventually settle down as more people become immune either through vaccination or infection. In the meantime, "one of my worst fears is that we will continue to have large numbers of infected children and adults … and that we will see the complications of measles that we're very familiar with," noted Joffe.

The most concerning thing about the measles resurgence, however, is what it could signal for the future. "My mentor, Dr. Natasha Crowcroft, calls measles the canary in the coal mine," says U of T's Dr. Shelly Bolotin. "Because when systems break down, that's what you see first, because it's so infectious. What we should be thinking about is, if we're seeing this much measles, what else are people not immune to?" **CH**

Olympic jubilation, as Sidney Crosby, already gloveless and stick-free after famously flinging his gear airborne, celebrates the Golden Goal against the USA at the 2010 Winter Games. (For more on Crosby's goal, see page 52.)

FEATURE

Great Moments in Canadian Hockey

A visual tribute to our favourite game

By Don Weekes

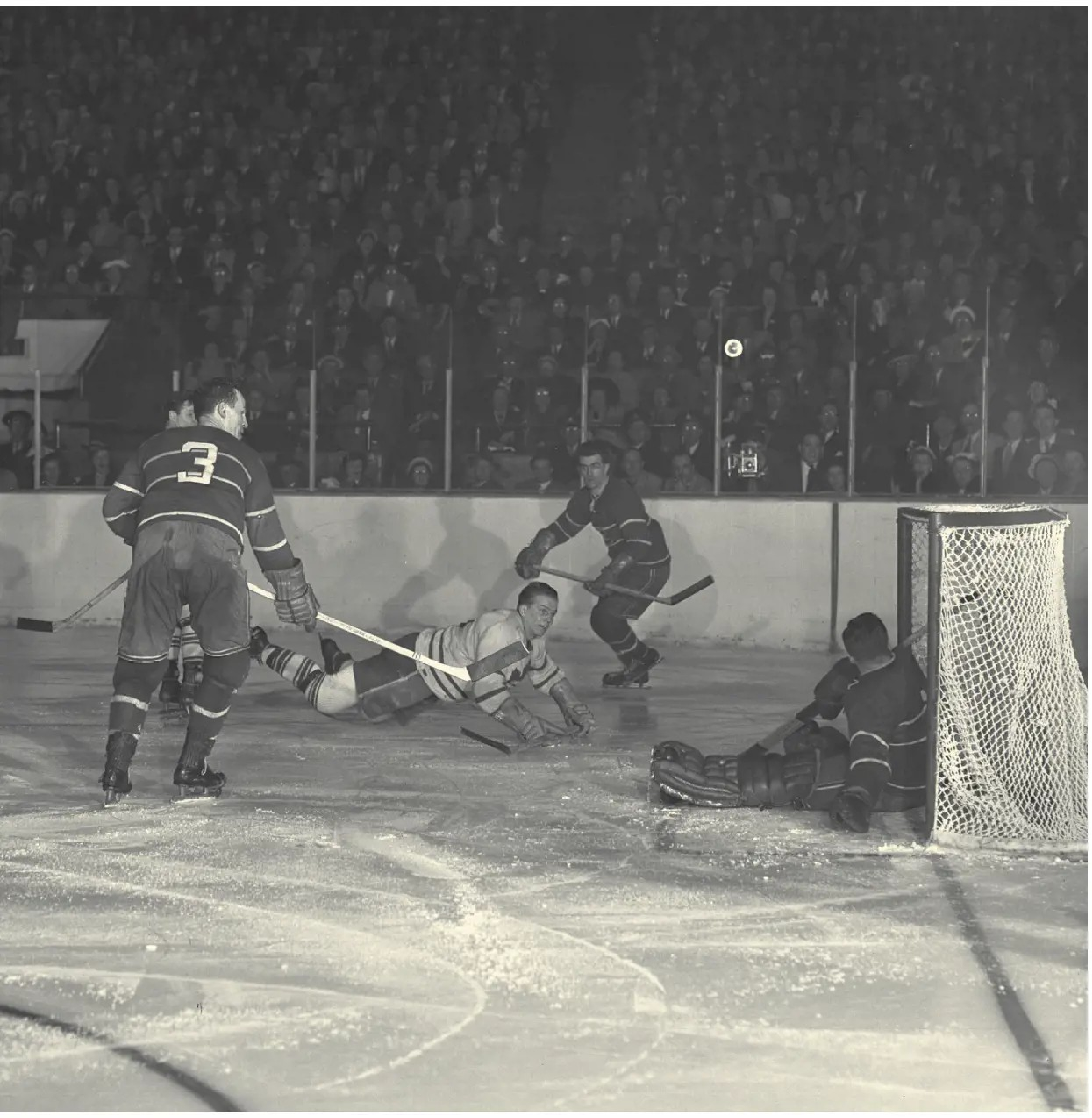
NIEDERMAYER
27

AP PHOTO/CHRIS O'MEARA

For a time, hockey was an impossibly hard game to photograph. The slow chemical reactions of early cameras prevented photographers from capturing the fast on-ice action in the dimly lit hockey barns of the day. That's why old-time play has mostly posed portraits and team shots, such as the 1893 Montreal AAA, the first Stanley Cup winners, and the Winnipeg Falcons, the first Olympic champions in 1920. Subjects back then rarely, if ever, smiled for the camera. One reason is because smiles are harder to hold than a serious look and any body movement would blur the photo — that is, until the 1930s, when high-speed film allowed shooters to capture arena hockey in every manner.

Among several examples here of modern photos that bring to life a shared moment of history in the making is Sidney Crosby's Golden Goal at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Canada was playing with a 2-1 lead against the USA for the gold medal. With 24.4 seconds remaining, Zach Parise slid the tying goal under Roberto Luongo to force sudden-death overtime. Crosby had played an all-around solid game and scored three times in six tournament matches. More than seven minutes into OT, Crosby makes good on a Jarome Iginla pass, whipping a low shot through Ryan Miller's pads.

Excited. Possessed. Fierce. A thousand words could not describe that bearing and look of conquest etched across Crosby's face.



MICHAEL BURNS SR./HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

Barilko's clincher

The Bill Barilko goal, 75 years old in 2026, is still regarded as the Maple Leafs' greatest Stanley Cup clincher. The Barilko story is of a marginal defenceman, reportedly facing a demotion, who seized the moment and overnight became a hockey hero — and soon, a legendary figure of tragedy. Defying the stay-at-home system of coach Joe Primeau, Barilko played up past Montreal's offensive blue line and fired a riser beyond goalie Gerry McNeil for Toronto's ninth Stanley Cup title in 1951. Barilko is captured in mid-air, eyeing the puck's flight path into McNeil's net.

Sadly, that summer, while returning from a fishing trip in northern Quebec, Barilko disappeared in a plane crash. His remains and those of pilot Dr. Henry Hudson weren't discovered until 1962, the year the Maple Leafs won their next Stanley Cup.

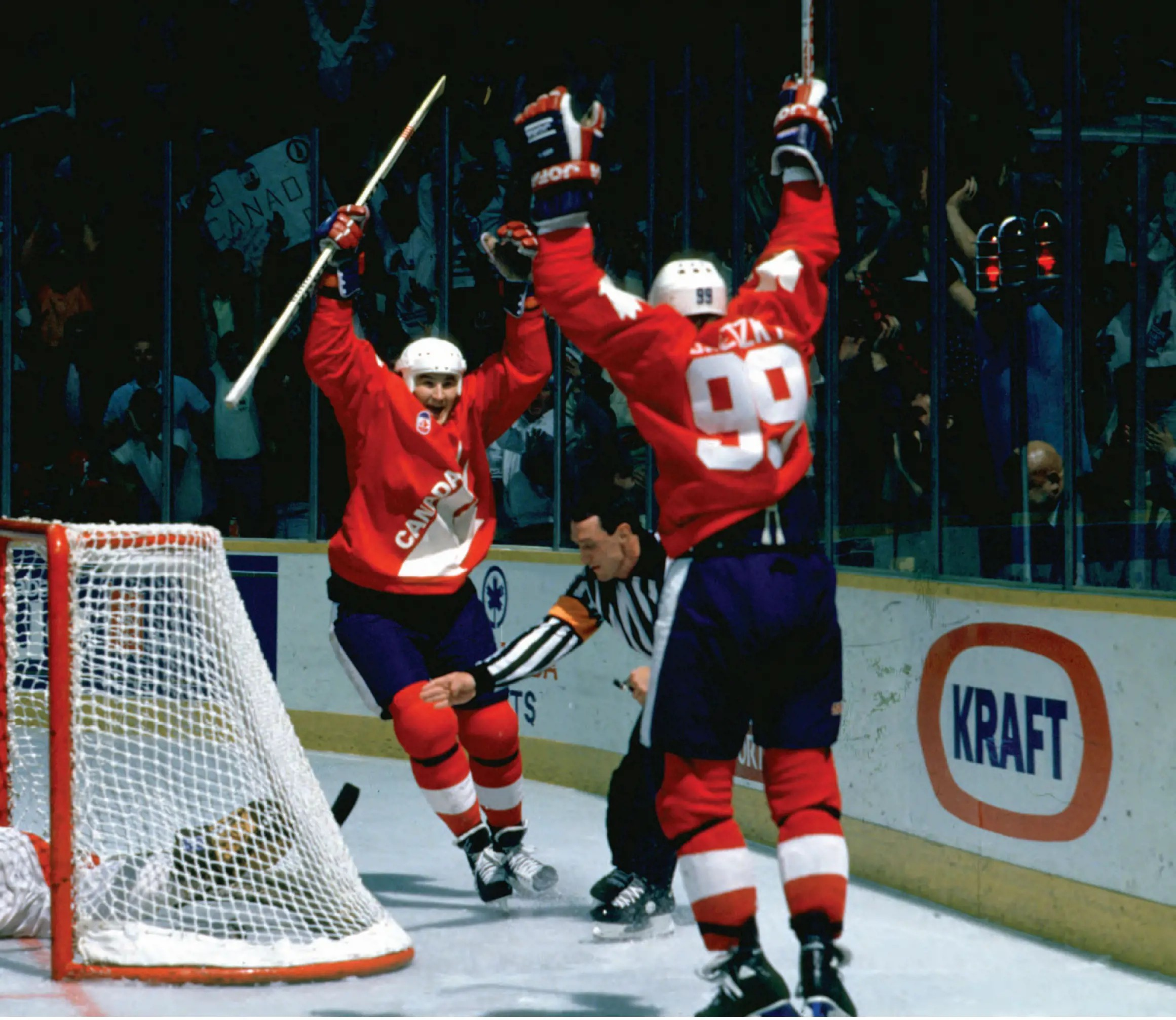


PHOTO BY BRUCE BENNETT STUDIOS VIA GETTY IMAGES STUDIOS/GETTY IMAGE

Gretzky to Lemieux

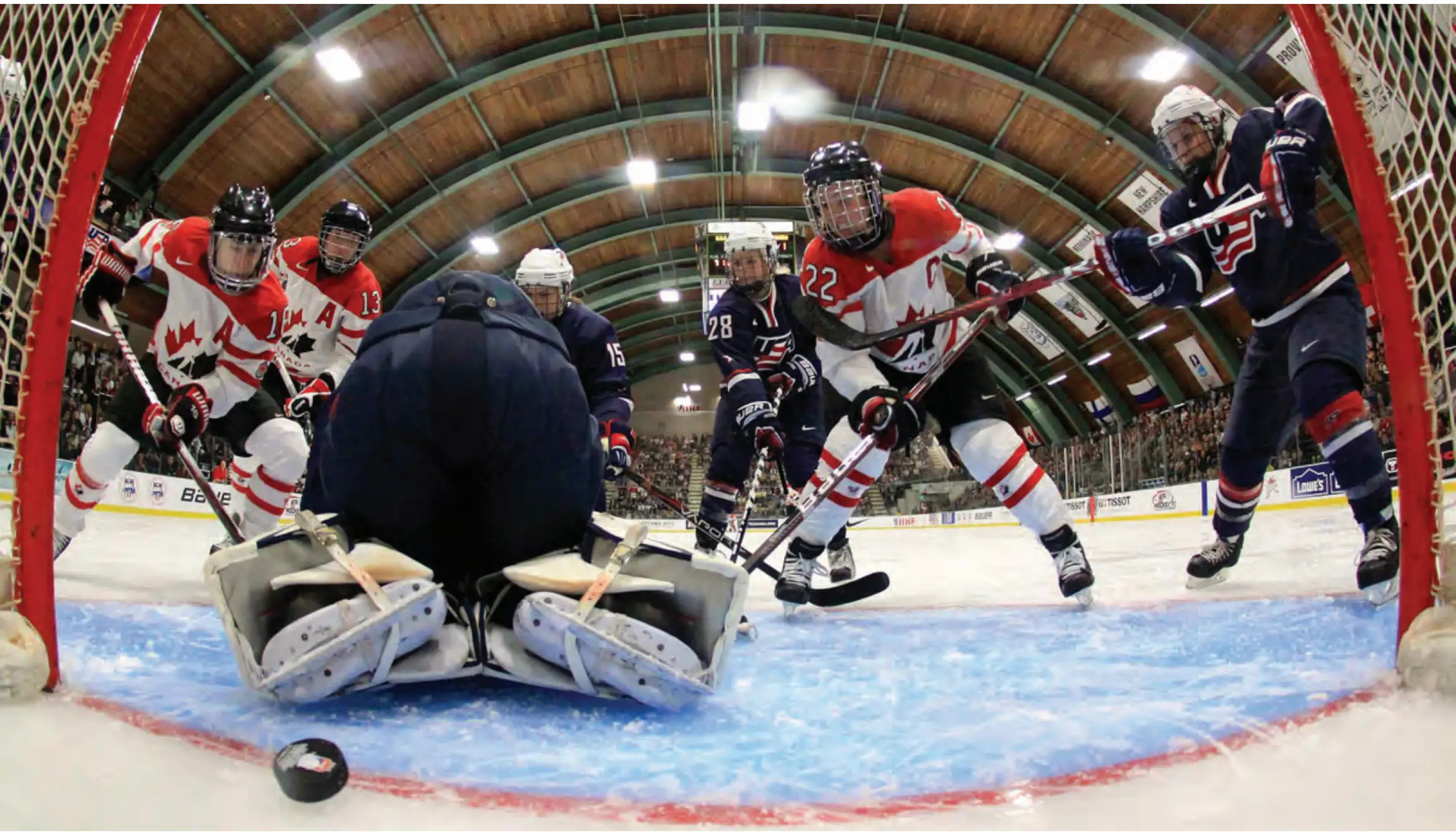
So epic was this one puck pass at the 1987 Canada Cup, so monumental was its electrifying series winner and so famous are its two finishers that Canada's breakout play today lives on in hockey vernacular with the conceit of its own proper nickname and a deep legacy in international play as "Gretzky to Lemieux."

Canada and the Soviet Union were icing their deepest rosters in the tightly contested three-game series. Each had scored OT wins by identical 6-5 tallies and, now tied 5-5 with a minute left, world hockey supremacy was on tap — along with, naturally, those bragging rights. Canada struck with defenceman Larry Murphy playing decoy on right wing as Wayne Gretzky tore into the offensive zone with Mario Lemieux trailing. Only Igor Stelnov was back. Gretzky slipped the puck to the 21-year-old Lemieux, who lasered a wrister top shelf beyond Sergei Mylnikov. Pandemonium ensued at Hamilton's Copps Coliseum — and everywhere else.

Orr soars

By 1970, Bobby Orr, in his fourth NHL season with the Boston Bruins, had become a household name throughout the hockey world. What left a truly indelible mark was his moment of victory in scoring that year's Stanley Cup winner. Orr is immortalized in black and white, arms outstretched, in full Marvel-superhero flight. His youthful face radiates sheer delight. The thrill of triumph, already in celebratory mode. The give-and-go play with linemate Derek Sanderson sent Orr into the crease area of St. Louis Blues goalie Glenn Hall. Orr entered that no man's land and scored on the forehand as Blues defender Noël Picard hooked his stick blade around Orr's left ankle. The illegal tactic propelled Orr skyward and into hockey history, cementing the Parry Sound, Ont., native's preternatural speed and skill in hockey lore as the game's greatest player. This image remains the sport's most enduring and recognizable photograph.

FRED KEENAN/HOCKEY HALL OF FAME



DAVE SANDFORD/IIHF

A greater goal

Like many challenges in breaking the gender boundaries of sport, Jayna Hefford's second-period goal in Canada's 5-4 gold-medal win at the 2012 International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) Women's World Championship and her play alongside captain Hayley Wickenheiser (who was parked at the doorstep of USA goalie Molly Schaus) has deep origins in the past. Its specialness — no greater, no less — draws on the sporting prowess of early heroines Hilda Ranscombe and the great Fanny "Bobbie" Rosenfeld, plus more recently, Angela James and Cammi Granato, the first women of Hockey Hall of Fame status. Their cultural struggles throughout the evolution of women's play have brought a brighter future where the collective athletic efforts of today's stars, like Hefford, are finally being recognized as equal but different. Regrettably, it's taken more than a century of defiance and game discrimination to reach the ultimate goals of a more inclusive, competitive world game and the promising success of the Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL).

Top of the Worlds

Until 1954 happened, the World Championship typically meant a second-place finish for European and American teams to Canada's gold medal. That winter in Stockholm, a crowd of 16,000 watched the Soviet Union outskate and outmuscle Canada, dismantling the East York Lyndhursts 7-2 to capture gold in their first superpower showdown. The defeat shocked Canada to its core, with front-page headlines and editorials everywhere.

The 1955 Worlds would be different. To exact revenge and restore national pride, the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association chose the hard-charging Penticton Vees, led by the legendary Warwick brothers, forwards Grant, Bill and Dick. Accounts were settled in Canada's 5-0 golden beatdown of the Soviets. The country had briefly regained world supremacy and its hockey mojo, as seen here with left winger Vsevolod Bobrov, IIHF vice-president Bunny Ahearne and defenceman George McAvoy. This moment ushered in the great Canada-Soviet rivalry, with the Soviets monopolizing play in a near-invincible reign until the USSR's breakup in 1991.

BC SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Going global

Canada's historic entrance in international play began with the Winnipeg Falcons in a demonstration tournament at the 1920 Summer Olympics in Antwerp, Belgium. The Falcons, an unheralded squad of second- and third-generation Icelandic Canadians, crushed Czechoslovakia 15-0, USA 2-0 and Sweden 12-1. It didn't matter that Canada competed light years ahead of the under-skilled Europeans in ice hockey; the Falcons became the first Olympic gold medallists and the first world champions. Their participation led to world hockey's greater acceptance across Canada and in Europe. Awed by the Canadians' speedy play, according to the coverage in the *Hamilton Spectator,* some speculated that forward Mike Goodman's skates "had a motor concealed in them somewhere."

Trailblazer

Sometimes remembered as "hockey's forgotten pioneer," Willie O'Ree became the first Black NHLer but received little of the spectacle that followed Jackie Robinson's integration of major league baseball. Next-day coverage mostly missed the magnitude of O'Ree's achievement in his Boston Bruins debut in January 1958. In a 22-year pro career tainted by relentless racial abuse from both players and spectators, O'Ree played just 45 NHL games. "I wanted dearly to be just another hockey player," O'Ree says in Brian Kendall's 1994 book, *100 Great Moments in Hockey*, "but I knew I couldn't."

TOP: HOCKEY HALL OF FAME. BOTTOM: JAMES MCCARTHY/HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

OTTAWA CITIZEN/HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

Game changer

It happened so quickly, the play-by-play call of “Heaney! Beautiful move. Shot and a goal. What a play by Geraldine Heaney!” failed to wholly capture her sublime deke and amazing pass to herself through the legs of USA defender Lauren Apollo. Then, with goalie Kelly Dyer scrambling out, diving for the puck, Heaney capitalized, timing her shot perfectly into the top corner beyond Dyer; it scored the gold-medal winner at the inaugural 1990 IIHF Women’s World Championship. Not done, still at breakaway speed, Heaney’s skate caught Dyer’s blocker, launching her airborne, Bobby Orr-style, before she crashed into the end boards.

On paper, like the announcer’s call, the words diminish the virtuoso performance of Heaney’s artistry on ice. With that momentum swing, Canada, attired in their infamous pink-and-white uniforms, scored twice more, defeating the USA 5-2. Centre France St-Louis figured in four goals, but the level of Heaney’s play signalled the arrival of women’s hockey on the world stage. The play became the dream of every girl watching.

DRAPER
MAY
10

Teen titans

Canada's teens came into the 1991 IIHF World Junior Championship icing stellar talent in 17-year-olds Eric Lindros and Scott Niedermayer and several future 1,000-game NHLers (among them, Kris Draper and Patrice Brisebois). An unlikely hero, however, emerged among the world's next superstars to deliver arguably "the biggest play ever" on Saskatchewan ice.

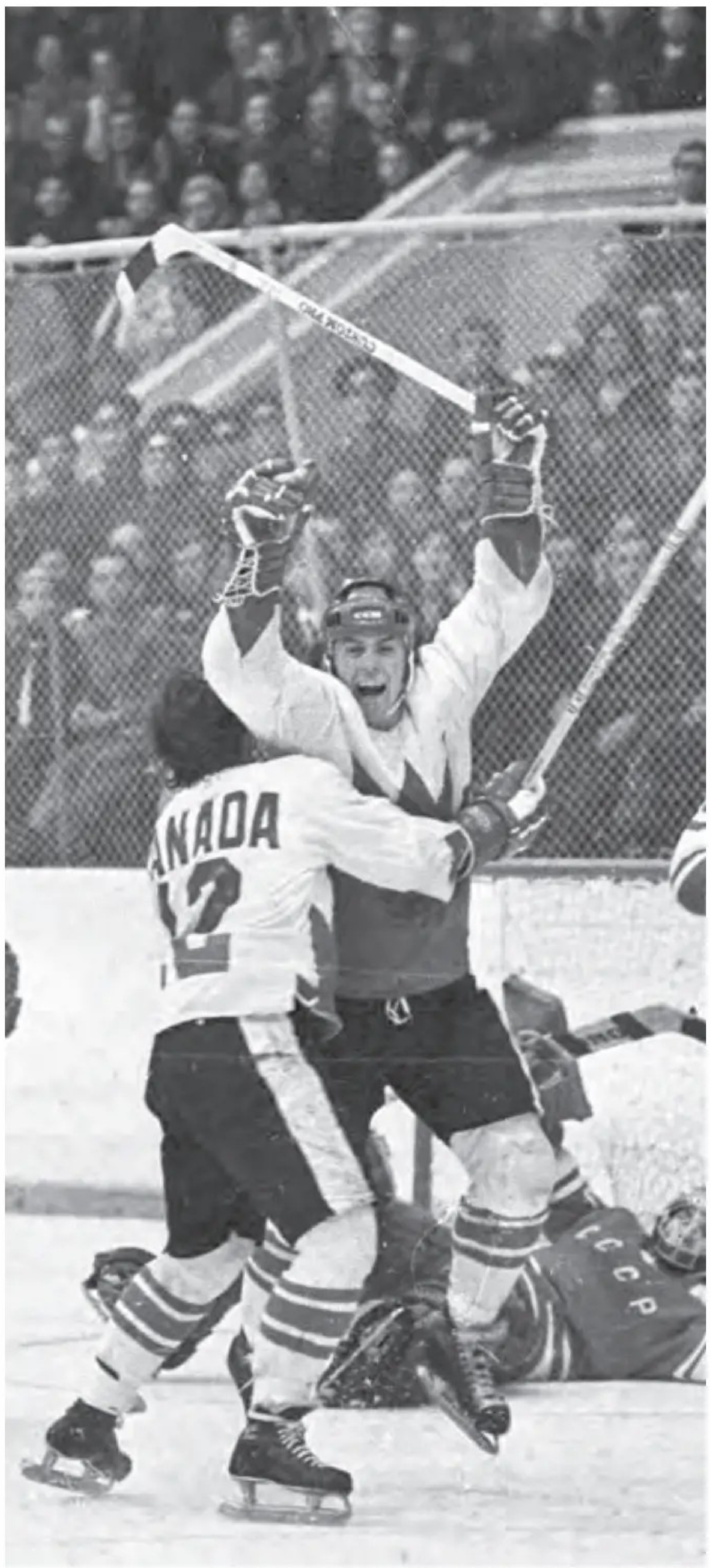
With the Soviets carrying the play late in the taut gold medal 2-2 tie, scoreless rearguard John Slaney intercepted a clearing pass off the boards by Alexei Kudashov. Slaney blasted a hurried shot through traffic and beyond goalie Sergei Zvyagin. Saskatchewan Place went wild, as did TV viewers across Canada. With 5:13 left on the clock, Canada hung on, stymying the Soviets' onslaught. Today, Slaney's goal in Canada's victory is still regarded as "a watershed moment" that elevated the Boxing Day-New Year's tournament into a holiday ritual.

Summit showdown

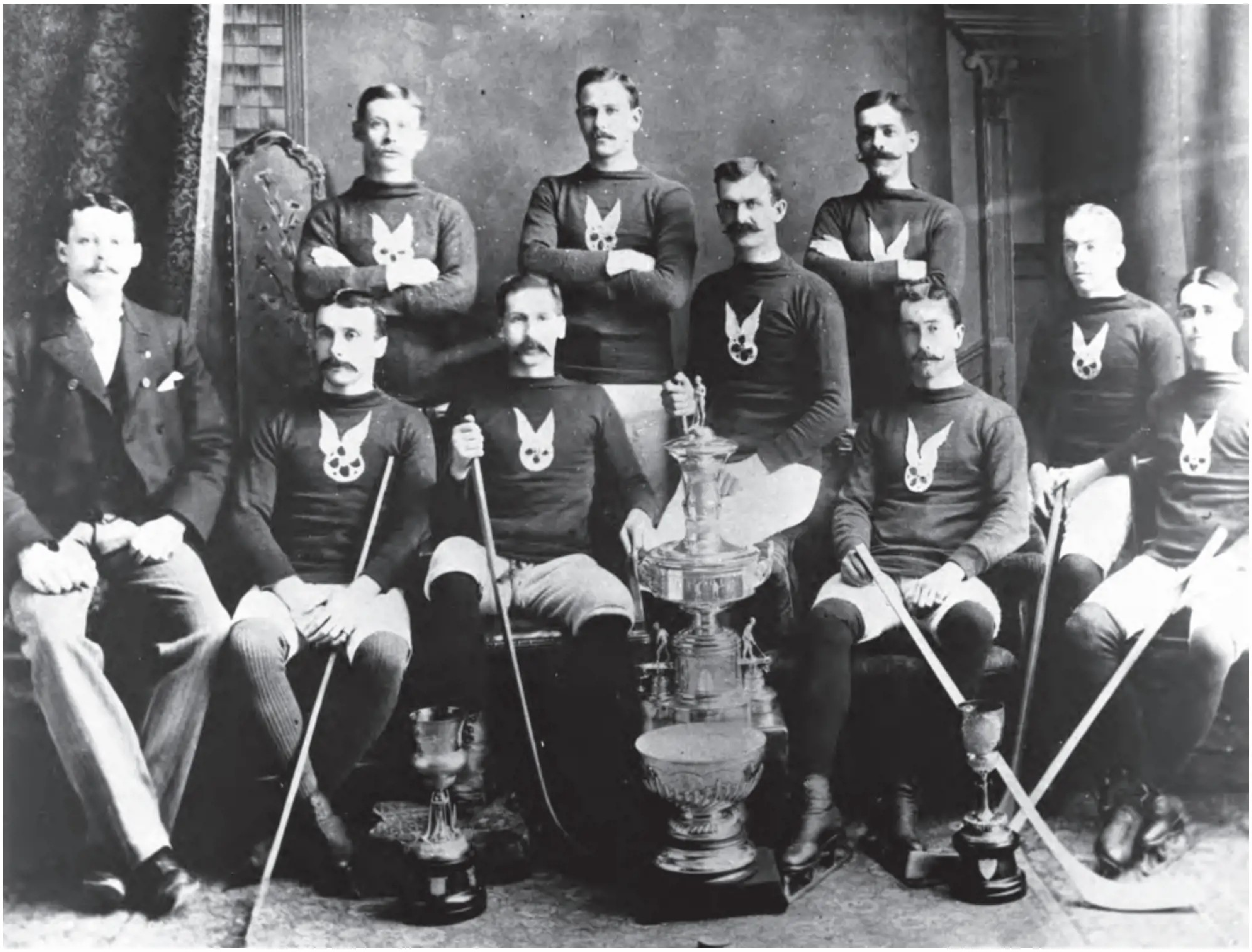
No play better characterizes the mood of an overwrought hockey nation — nor the earlier action, drama or cliffhanger suspense of the 1972 Summit Series between Canada and the Soviet Union — than Paul Henderson's legendary tournament winner.

"When I saw it go in, I just went bonkers," remembers Henderson in *100 Greatest Moments in Hockey*. His face, lit up in jubilation, reflected Canada's euphoria and the whew-factor back home. With our national self-worth at stake, victory came with 34 seconds left in the eight-game series. Yvan Cournoyer's celebratory bear hug spoke volumes, his number 12 and "CANADA" loudly, proudly blazoned across the back of his sweater. Fallen goalie Vladislav Tretiak eyed Henderson. The screened audience of Soviet supporters and military men at Moscow's Luzhniki Ice Palace stared away, stunned in disbelief and dread.

Two disparate hockey rivals — Europe's most decorated world champions and Canada's best professionals — collided for the first time ever in a game of brinkmanship that transcended the boundaries of sport. Cocky, commercialized and conned by our stagnant pro game, the Summit Series' unifying experience defined Canadian hockey and us as Canadians thanks to that moment in time.



TOP: THE CANADIAN PRESS/DAVE BUSTON. BOTTOM: PHOTO BY FRANK LENNON / TORONTO STAR



HOCKEY HALL OF FAME

The first Stanley Cup champions

Magnificent in their famed blue jerseys and white twin-winged wheel crests, the Montreal AAA evoke those nascent years of 60-minute men competing without protective gear, on natural ice and playing short seasons of eight games in the Amateur Hockey Association of Canada — the top senior league in the country. Without a playoff format in place, the inaugural Stanley Cup of 1893 was awarded to Montreal based on season wins, which came in their last match, a 2-1 victory over the Montreal Crystals. While no direct mention was made in local newspapers, the *Montreal Star* reported that the team claimed top seed and so the championship, as "the puck flew up and down and sticks were whacking on skates and the crowds cheering and shouting on all sides" in that final contest. Months later, Lord Stanley would return to England, never having attended a match in competition for his Cup.CH

This picturesque remnant of the first Lachine Canal dates back to 1825

ARTUR STASZEWSKI

FEATURE

The Lives of the LACHINE CANAL

Montreal's key waterway marks 200 years

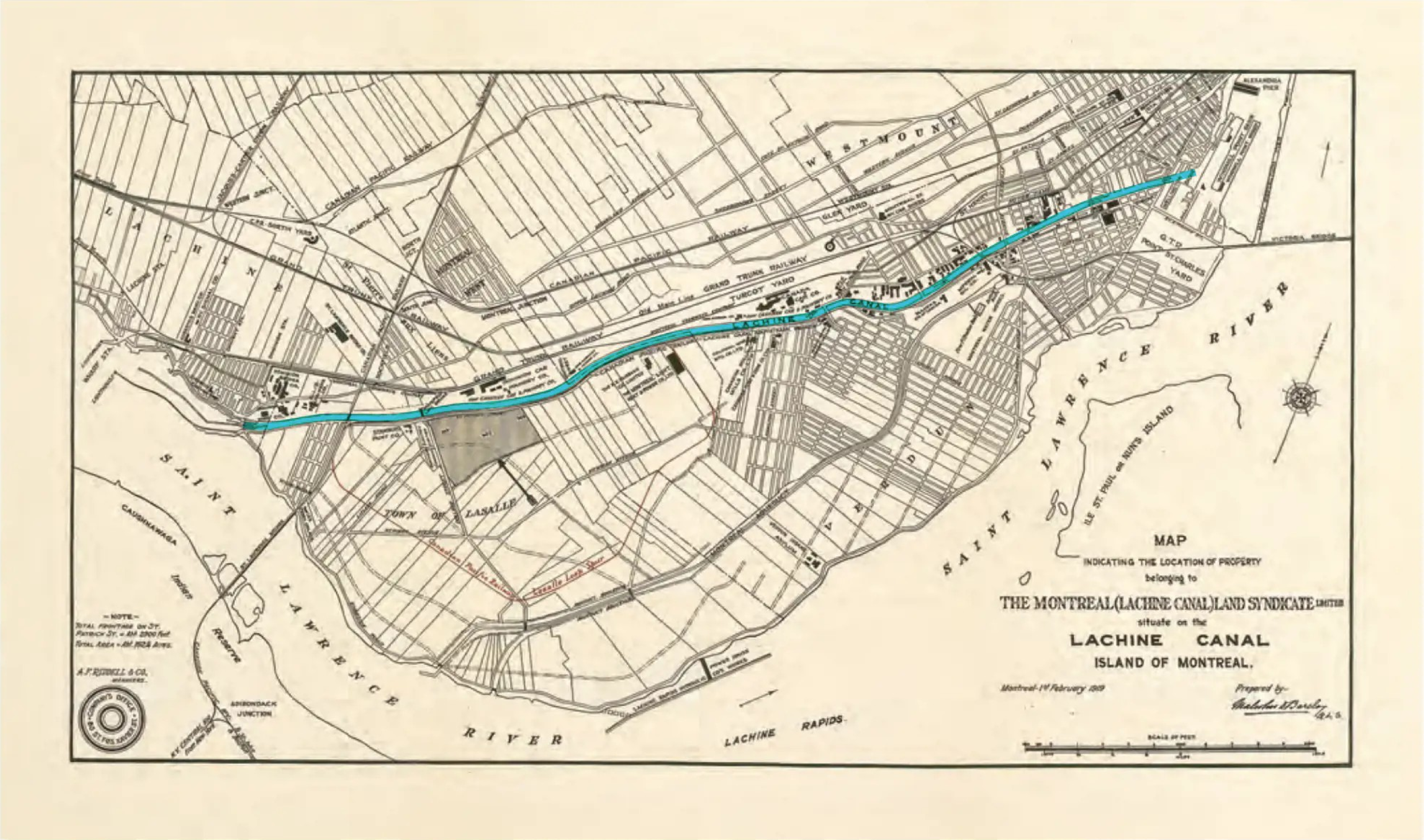
By Joanne Burgess

The St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers converge at the western tip of the Island of Montreal, and there, the St. Lawrence widens, forming Lake St-Louis. Then, suddenly to the southeast, the waterway narrows and drops precipitously. Vast quantities of water are funnelled through this channel and propelled over shallows, boulders and small rocky outcrops, falling 13 metres over three kilometres. Known as *Ohnawa* in the Mohawk language (kanien'kehà:ka), these are the rapids that awed French explorer Jacques Cartier when he first encountered them in October 1535. As he noted in his journal: "At that point there is the most violent rapid it is possible to see, which we were unable to pass."

Navigation upstream remained impossible for almost 300 years, until the opening of the Lachine Canal in 1825. Since then, the canal has evolved and changed while remaining an important feature of Montreal life. To mark the canal's 200th anniversary, here's an exploration of some of its many lives.

From dreams of China to dreams of a canal

Christened the Sault St-Louis by Samuel de Champlain early in the 17th century, these rapids were a formidable obstacle to navigation and endowed the unknown landscape beyond with mysterious possibilities. What lay upriver? Could this be the doorway to China, the long-sought route to the Orient and its wealth? Such was the conviction of


WESTMOUNT
LACHINE CANAL
SAINT LAWRENCE RIVER
TOWN OF LASALLE
LACHINE RAPIDS
VICTORIA BRIDGE
ILE ST. PAUL or NUNS ISLAND
MAP
INDICATING THE LOCATION OF PROPERTY
belonging to
THE MONTREAL (LACHINE CANAL) LAND SYNDICATE LIMITED
situate on the
LACHINE CANAL
ISLAND OF MONTREAL.
Montreal 1st February 1919
Prepared by

This map from 1919 shows the location of the Lachine Canal — including the rapids

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René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle when he set out from Ville-Marie in July 1669 with a group of companions and a flotilla of canoes heading up the St. Lawrence. A year later, the men returned empty-handed and were mocked as the "*Chinois*" by their neighbours; a settlement on the nearby shores of Lake St-Louis, on land owned by La Salle, came to be known as "La Chine."

Throughout the French regime, the Lachine rapids remained an insurmountable barrier to continuous navigation on the St. Lawrence. Their presence contributed to the development of Montreal as the westernmost harbour for ocean-going vessels and a transshipment hub. To reach the interior of the continent, French explorers, missionaries, fur traders and soldiers were forced to first travel overland, from the colonial town of Ville-Marie to the hamlet of Lachine, a journey of roughly 11 kilometres. The Sulpician seigneurs of the Island of Montreal were quick to recognize that a canal would be an effective means of facilitating the movement of goods and travellers upriver. Work began in 1689 but was soon interrupted — and then abandoned entirely — because of conflicts between the French and the Haudenosaunee as well as escalating costs.

In the decades following the Conquest of New France and the American Revolution, settlement along the St. Lawrence in Upper Canada increased and the impetus for improving navigation upriver from Montreal grew. Talk of canals filled the air, but the cost and technical challenges of such an undertaking were daunting. In 1805, as a stopgap measure, colonial authorities attempted to open a channel through the rapids, but this venture met with limited success. The War of 1812 and its aftermath created a favourable context for canal building, but not on the Island of Montreal.

Discouraged by the inertia of the imperial authorities and fearful of the economic impact of the Erie Canal, whose construction had just begun, a group of Montreal merchants decided to take matters into their own hands. In 1819, they formed the Company of Proprietors of the Lachine Canal and began the arduous task of raising capital for their vision. This private venture failed miserably and, in 1821, the Legislature of Lower Canada, with the financial support of London, appointed commissioners to supervise what had now become a public undertaking. The ceremonial groundbreaking took place in Lachine on July 17, 1821, and work then advanced slowly until the final segment of the canal was completed in 1825.

Building and rebuilding a canal

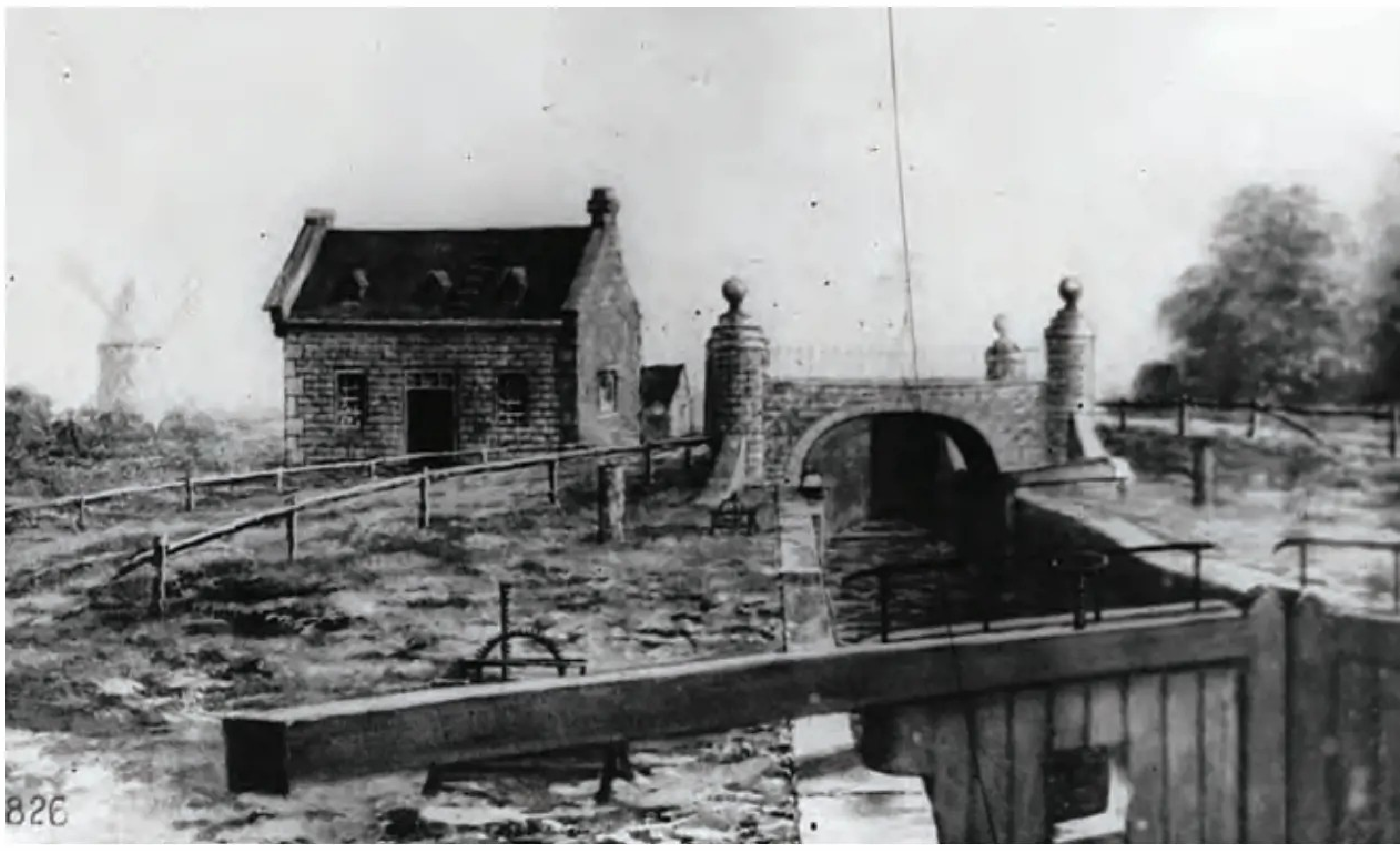
The late 18th and early 19th centuries were the golden age of canal building. When construction began in earnest on the Lachine Canal, Canadian authorities had access to the expertise of engineers well versed in canal design and the challenges of regulating the flow of water. Each canal, however, was unique due to the characteristics of its associated body of water and the landscape it had to traverse. The Lachine Canal posed specific challenges due to its 15.5-kilometre trajectory, 13-metre descent between its upper entrance at Lachine and junction with the port of Montreal, in addition to being a route over long stretches of solid rock and swamp.

The path and the specifications of a canal — its width and depth, as well as the number and the size of its locks — were a response to the physical environment, but they were also determined by the needs of contemporary shipping and available financing. Inevitably, as commerce evolved and grew, the transportation requirements of trade changed as well, as did the capacity and characteristics of ships involved in inland navigation. As a result, every canal risked becoming inadequate or, worse, obsolete. But their capacity could not easily be enlarged or improved. The only real solution was creative destruction — the progressive and systematic demolition of portions of the existing structure followed by additional excavation and new construction. This was the fate of the Lachine Canal: open to navigation in 1825, substantially rebuilt in the 1840s and again 30 years later.

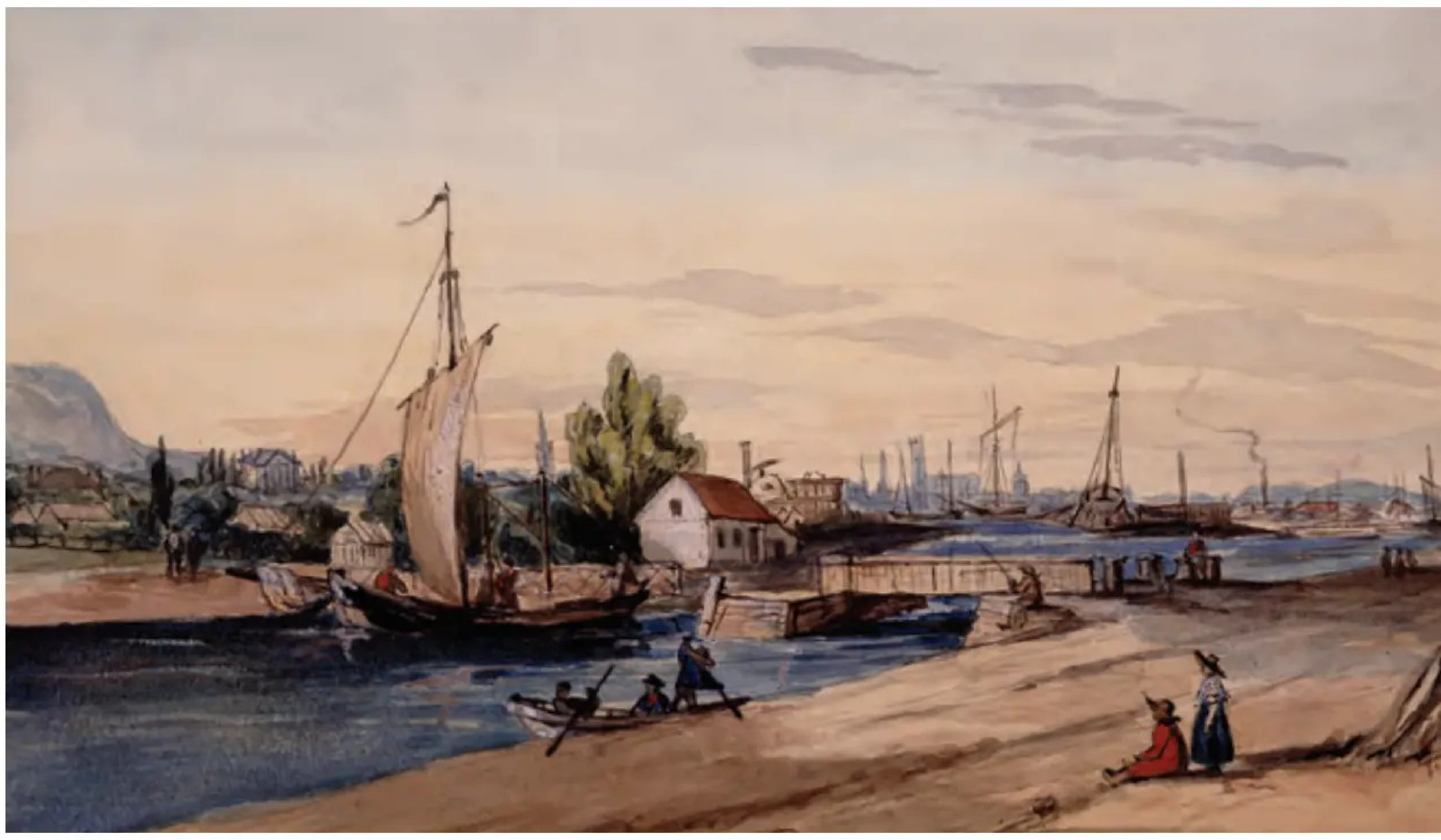
Winter was a time of seasonal unemployment in Montreal, and contractors took advantage of the situation to reduce wages and exert pressure on their workers

The first Lachine Canal was conceived in the age of the sail, when inland navigation in North America relied on the bateau and the Durham boat, both relatively small vessels with flat bottoms. To accommodate them, the initial canal was 15 metres wide and 1.5 metres deep, with seven locks measuring six metres by 30 metres. A towpath along the north side facilitated the movement of boats. By the late 1830s, the dimensions of the canal were deemed inadequate. With funding from the imperial government and under the supervision of the Board of Works of the Province of Canada, the Lachine Canal was enlarged to accommodate steamboats and vessels plying the Great Lakes. Its depth was almost doubled, to 2.75 metres, and the locks were modified to increase their dimensions while reducing their number.

The 1870s and early 1880s saw an even more ambitious reconstruction project. The canal's depth was again increased, this time to 4.25 metres, and pairs of locks replaced the single locks to reduce congestion. During these years, the canal was widened and deepened, and the area between the St. Gabriel locks and the Port of Montreal was reconfigured to increase the capacity for transshipment and warehousing and to more fully integrate the easternmost portion of the canal with the harbour. As a result, ocean-going vessels could now enter the canal to take on and deliver cargo. By the late 19th

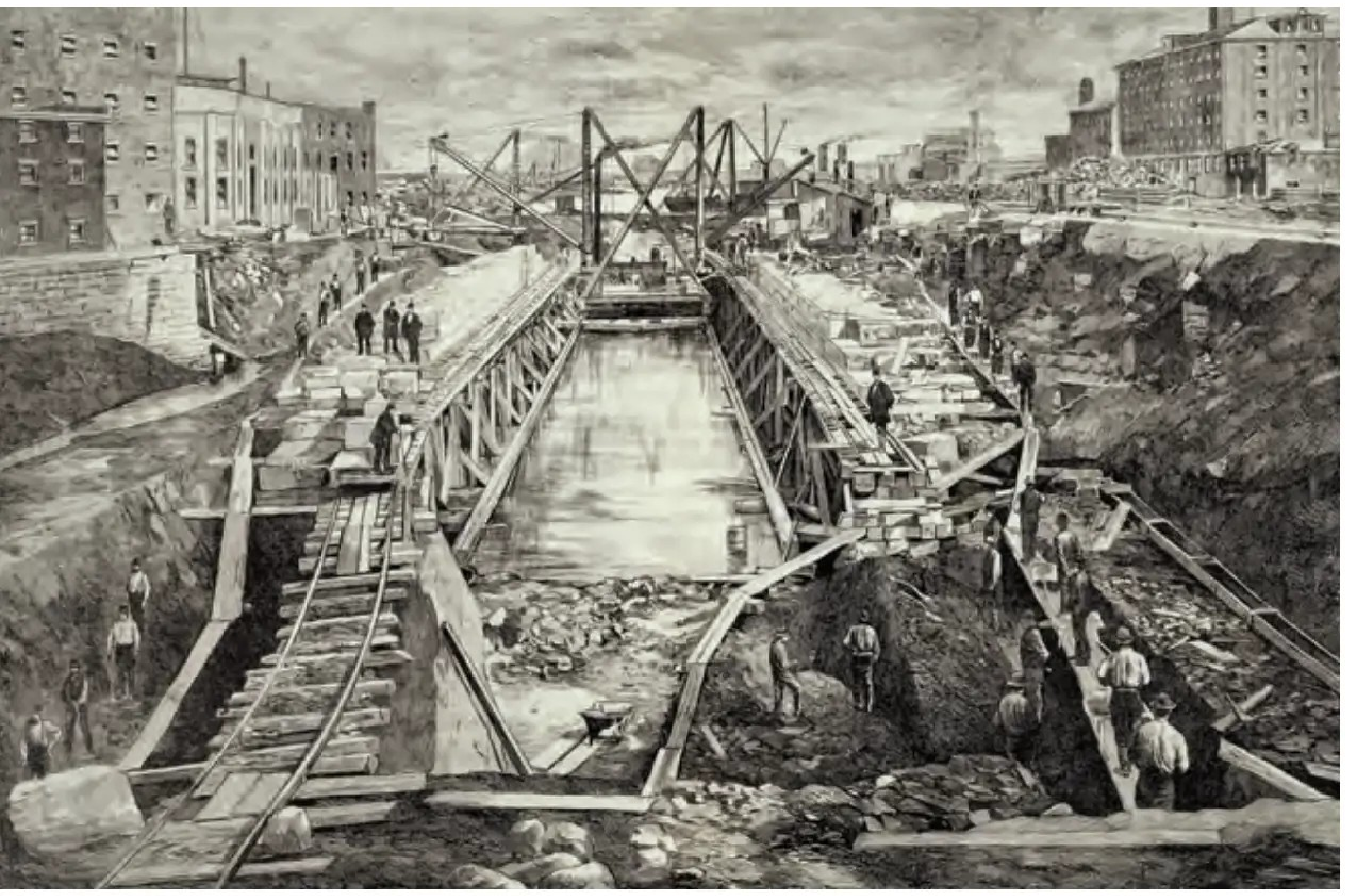


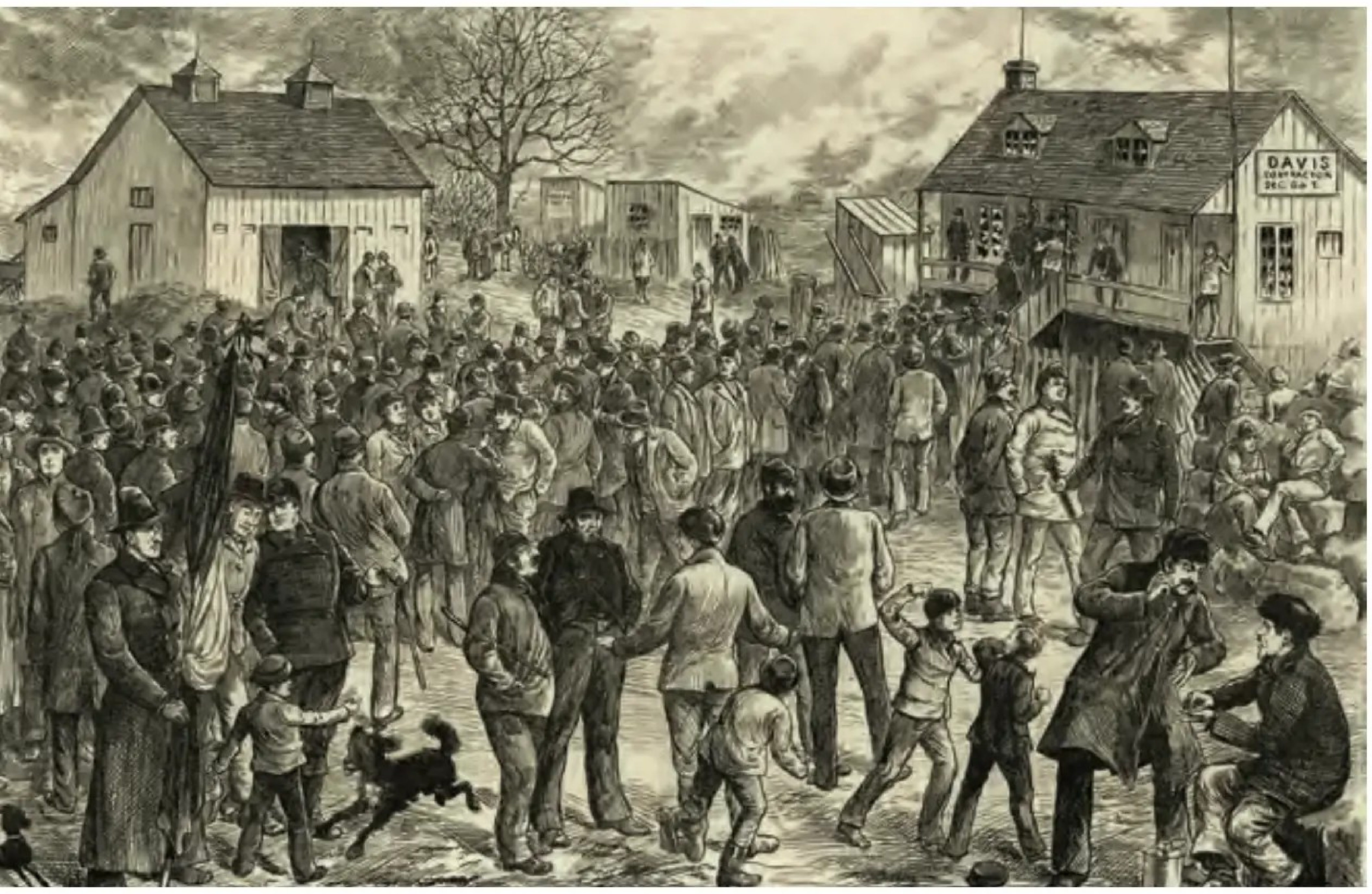
Top: This watercolour of the canal's entrance, as it looked in 1826, was painted by John Hugh Ross circa 1910



Above: This 1850s watercolour of the canal shows the small sailing ships that plied the waters

TOP: MCCORD STEWART MUSEUM MP-1976.288.2. BOTTOM: MCCORD STEWART MUSEUM M984.273





Top: A photolithograph of work on the Saint-Gabriel locks during the canal's widening

Above: The Lachine Canal's labourers go on strike in 1877, as illustrated by Henri Julien

TOP: MCCORD STEWART MUSEUM M979.87.285. BOTTOM: MCCORD STEWART MUSEUM M979.87.427

century, the Lachine Canal had reached its full extent, with many characteristics that still persist.

Constructing, enlarging and improving the canal was a monumental labour-intensive undertaking. Although some of the back-breaking work was eliminated by the introduction of steam shovels in the 1870s, these could only be used in certain areas. For the most part, canal-building continued to rely on hard, physical labour with picks, shovels and wheelbarrows, supported by carters with their horses and wagons. More specialized tasks required carpenters and stonemasons.

The bulk of the labour force was made up of migrant labourers, for the most part Irish immigrants. They were hired by the canal contractors and lived in shanties near the work site, sometimes with their families. Their working and living conditions were dismal; they endured long hours and meagre pay, often unscrupulous overseers and a harsh environment. Those enlarging the canal in the 1840s and 1870s worked through the winter months, when navigation was interrupted, the canal drained and segment after segment could be rebuilt. Winter was a time of seasonal unemployment in Montreal, and contractors took advantage of the situation to reduce wages and exert pressure on their workers. It's not surprising that violent strikes erupted in 1843, worsened by conflicts between the Irish from Connaught and from Cork, and that canal labourers again walked off the job in 1877 — this time with the support of Montreal's nascent labour movement and Joe Beef, the colourful proprietor of a tavern near the canal.

The heart of industrial Montreal

The building of the Lachine Canal was promoted by merchants, forwarders and shipping companies because the improved flow of goods between Montreal and Upper Canada and points west was vital to their economic interests. The canal was designed to be a commercial highway — and it achieved that goal. The number of ships and the volume and value of merchandise passing through it increased in a spectacular fashion from the 1820s to the 1950s.

But the canal wasn't simply a thoroughfare; it was a transportation and transshipment hub, a crucial link in transcontinental and international logistics and supply chains. The lower segment, known as the Montreal terminus, was the heart of this hub; there, numerous basins, wharves and warehouses were frequented by canallers, lake freighters and ocean-going cargo ships unloading or loading lumber, coal, wheat and other grains, as well as a range of manufactured goods and raw materials from foreign lands.

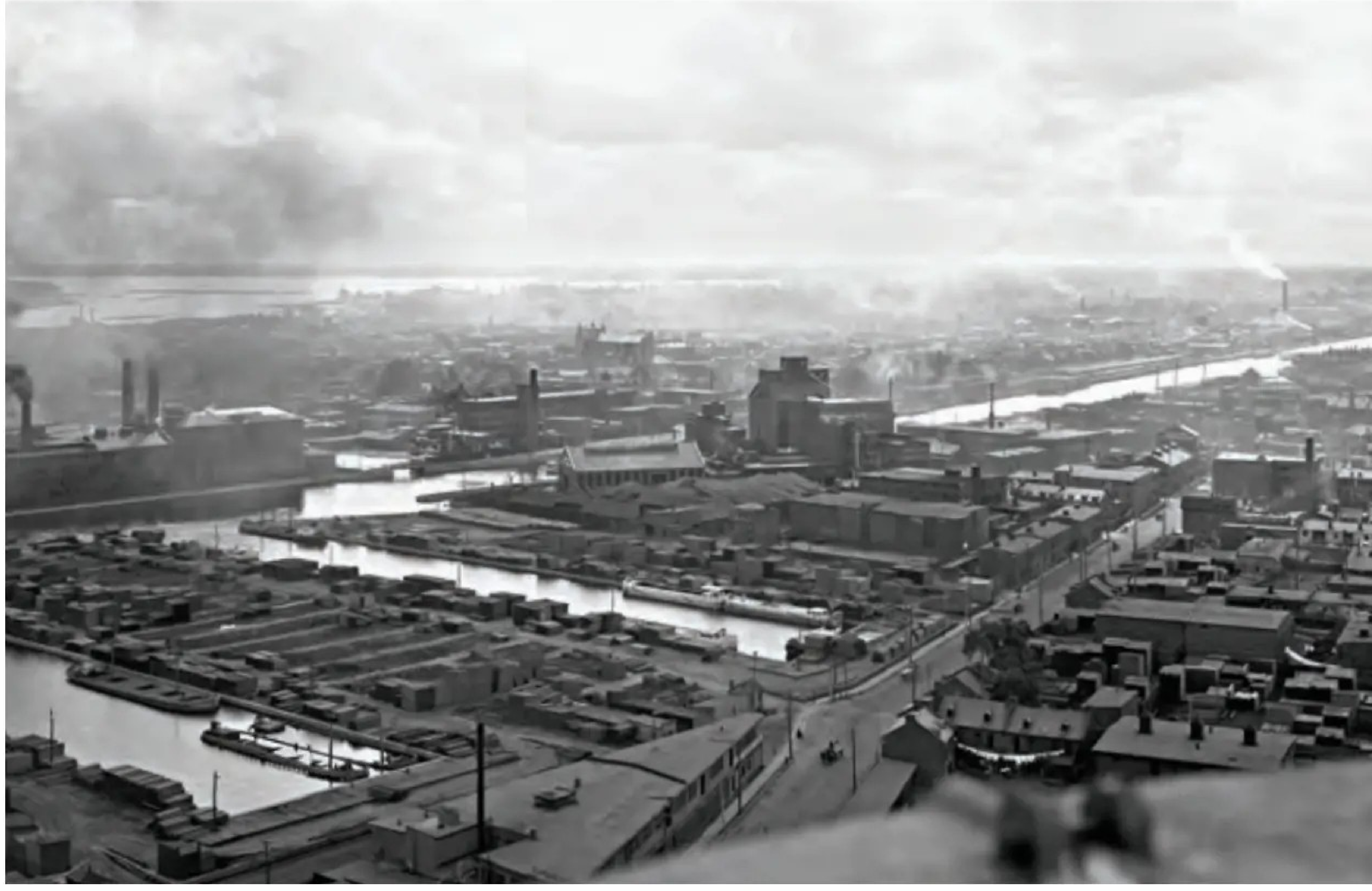
However, the canal was destined to become more than a chapter in the history of Canadian transportation and commerce. The topography that had required the construction of numerous locks to manage the descent from Lachine to Montreal was not just an obstacle to be overcome. The change in elevation at each lock, and especially at the Montreal locks, also meant that the energy of the displaced water could be harnessed to generate power. By the 1840s, turbine technology was already being used elsewhere to drive industrial machinery, and many Montreal merchants and early industrialists recognized the canal's potential. When it was rebuilt in those years, channels similar to mill races were incorporated at each of the locks to feed new hydraulic lots set out and leased for factories.

Within a few years, grist mills, foundries and a host of metalworking factories were built on the aptly named Mill Street, along the basin above the two Montreal locks.

Additional hydraulic lots were soon leased and developed upstream, near the St. Gabriel locks, followed a few years later with similar developments at the Côte St. Paul locks. Hydraulic power was an early impetus to industrialization, but the canal's attraction persisted even when steam, and then electricity, became the dominant source of energy. It came to be known as Montreal's "Smokey Valley."

By the early 20th century, the whole of the Lachine Canal corridor was lined with hundreds of factories. It was a veritable who's who of Canadian business: the Grand Trunk/Canadian National Railway, Ogilvie Flour Mills, Redpath Sugar, Dominion Textile, The Steel Company of Canada, Northern Electric, Dominion Bridge, Sherwin-Williams, Imperial Tobacco — and the list goes on.

> **It came to be known as Montreal's "Smokey Valley." By the early 20th century, the whole of the Lachine Canal corridor was lined with hundreds of factories**



Top: The portion of the canal near the St. Gabriel locks in Montreal in 1896

Above: Businessman James Williamson's warehouse in 1887, close to both the canal and the railway tracks

TOP: MCCORD STEWART MUSEUM VIEW-2944. BOTTOM: MCCORD STEWART MUSEUM II-83368

Canal working-class life

The first Lachine Canal was essentially a rural waterway, crossing fields and farmland between the village of Lachine and Montreal, then a small colonial town of approximately 25,000 people. The arrival of industry along its banks, beginning at its lower entrance at the Port of Montreal and spreading beyond the city limits, changed this landscape. New working-class neighbourhoods and industrial suburbs emerged on both sides of the waterway, stretching from Montreal to Lachine. Their growth was stimulated by an insatiable demand for workers — men, women and children — and by large-scale immigration from the British Isles and Europe, as well as the migration of French Canadians from the countryside. These powered Montreal's growth to almost 700,000 residents by 1921.

The canal's neighbourhoods near Montreal were varied, influenced by their factories, ethnic and religious composition, and the shared history of the inhabitants. Griffintown was a predominantly Irish enclave, born in the pre-industrial city and shaped by its proximity to both the port and the canal. It was one of Montreal's earliest manufacturing districts.

Pointe-St-Charles had a different trajectory. Located south of the canal, it was farmland until the 1840s, divided into properties owned by various religious orders. Its emergence as an industrial and working-class neighbourhood was the result of the hydraulic industrialization along the canal as well as the opening of the Grand Trunk Railway shops in the 1850s. It was perhaps the most diverse of the canal's industrial districts, with large French-Canadian, Irish-Catholic and Anglo-Protestant populations and a labour force composed of highly skilled craftsmen, less-skilled factory hands and general labourers. Residential patterns within "the Point" reflected those fault lines.

A third important working-class community along the canal, St-Henri, was different. Located about halfway between Lachine and Montreal, it began in the late 18th century as a craft village. Its original population was French Canadian, and developments near the St. Gabriel locks in the mid-1850s attracted newcomers from the countryside around Montreal. As the population grew, the village became a town, and then a city later annexed by Montreal. Its elected officials worked aggressively — and successfully — to attract new industry. By 1901, the population of the three communities exceeded 50,000.

In many respects, whether you worked and lived in Griffintown, Pointe-St-Charles or St-Henri, daily life was similar. There were the schedules and routines of the factory, the struggles to pay the rent and feed one's family. There were moments of exceptional working-class solidarity, especially during and after the Second World War, when hard-fought strikes brought significant improvements in wages and working conditions to many. There was the fellowship and support found in parish life, and the strong bonds of family. There was a rich popular culture. The texture of life in those neighbourhoods in the mid-20th century can perhaps best be understood through novels like Gabrielle Roy's *Bonheur d'occasion* (translated as *The Tin Flute*), documentary films like *À Saint-Henri le cinq septembre* and the wealth of photographs preserved by archives, museums and local history societies.

A sea change

On June 26, 1959, Queen Elizabeth II, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Canadian Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker inaugurated the St. Lawrence Seaway. This massive binational infrastructure, begun in 1954, was 3,700 kilometres long and enabled ocean vessels to travel unimpeded up the St. Lawrence, past the Lachine and other rapids, through the Great Lakes to Lake Superior. At that moment, the Lachine Canal was made obsolete. It served a limited number of local businesses for a few years, but its days as a major maritime highway were over. Between 1966 and 1970, the basins and locks immediately upstream from the Port of Montreal were backfilled, and in 1970, the canal was officially closed to navigation.

What was now to be done with the canal? Was it to be backfilled in its entirety and the space

Top: Writer Gabrielle Roy sits with nine boys in Montreal's St-Henri district in August 1945

Above: Women enjoy canoeing on the first canal near Lachine, circa 1925

TOP: BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ARCHIVES NATIONALES DU QUÉBEC 548970. BOTTOM: MCCORD STEWART MUSEUM M2011.64.2.2.395

devoted to other purposes? By the mid-1970s, a new vision focused on improving urban life, revitalizing industrial and port areas and reconnecting with nature began to take shape — fuelled by broader social movements in Montreal and elsewhere. In the summer of 1975, a pilot project opened 1.6 kilometres of the canal's towpath to cyclists; two years later, the bike path was extended to the canal's full length. This was a crucial first step in the development of the Lachine Canal as a recreational and tourism destination, under the management of Parks Canada.

In the early 1990s, Parks Canada's mandate for the canal was broadened and its work intensified. All along the canal, factories were closing down or moving elsewhere and, paradoxically, their disappearance led to a growing awareness of the exceptional industrial heritage of the Lachine Canal. In 1997, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board recognized its importance by creating the Lachine Canal Manufacturing Complex National Historic Site of Canada.

> **By the mid-1970s, a new vision focused on improving urban life and reconnecting with nature began to take shape**

Over the next five years, Parks Canada restored the canal and its numerous features, including excavating its lower entrance at the harbour. In 2002, the Lachine Canal was reopened to navigation for pleasure craft. During the same period, Parks Canada's historians and archaeologists worked to document the canal's history and preserve elements of its heritage, in spite of the ongoing demolition and the conversion of former factories into lofts and condominiums.

As the Lachine Canal celebrates its 200th anniversary, it seems the waterway has entered a new phase in its long life. Yet, even in its commercial and industrial heyday, it was often appreciated as a place of leisure and contemplation. Back in October 1826, Montreal apothecary Romuald Trudeau described in his journal a walk along the "*canal de la Chine*" as being the most pleasant that Montreal had to offer.

Visitors today would no doubt agree. **CH**

Top: The former Redpath Sugar factory on the canal's south shore has a new life as condominiums

Above: In its latest life, the canal provides a leisurely place for kayaking and canoeing

TOP: STEPHANE BRUGGER. BOTTOM: ISTOCKPHOTO 2202642429

ESSAY

HOLLOW *argument*

The case for the true preservation of heritage buildings

By Eric Rodrigues

Picture a downtown street where only the front wall of a century-old building remains, propped up by steel girders, while a gleaming new tower rises behind. This practice — known as facadism — has become a familiar sight in many Canadian cities. It's a controversial compromise between old and new, preserving just the decorative face of history while the heart and soul of the building are gutted.

As development pressures mount and climate concerns grow, Canadians are debating how best to save our built heritage. Can we find a more holistic, ethical way to keep historic spaces alive? What's the environmental impact of demolition versus reuse? What's our vision for heritage conservation that goes beyond surface preservation?

The rise of facadism

Rapidly expanding cities such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal have seen a marked increase in facadism in recent decades. In Toronto especially, many heritage buildings have been reduced to ornamental storefronts with condos or office towers rising above and behind them. Vancouver and Montreal face similar pressures, often requiring the preservation of an exterior wall to satisfy heritage-planning policies, even while fundamentally transforming what lies beyond.

The practice sits at the centre of a heated debate in the heritage community. To its critics, facadism is an architectural sham, a superficial form of preservation that reduces historic buildings to stage sets. Vancouver heritage consultant Donald Luxton likens it to taxidermy. "This is not

ALAMY

THE TORONTO · STOCK · EXCHANGE
ERNST & YOUNG TOWER

The 1937 facade of the Toronto Stock Exchange, now the entrance to the Design Exchange in downtown Toronto

Most heritage professionals agree that facadism shouldn’t be the first choice for conservation

heritage conservation. It’s just putting a face on something,” he says, dismissing it as “putting the parsley on the developer’s plate.” Such partial preservation, critics argue, strips away the very aspects that give a building its character, integrity and cultural value — its three-dimensional form, interior spaces, craftsmanship and the lived history that unfolded within its walls.

On the other hand, proponents (or reluctant practitioners) of facadism see the practice as a pragmatic compromise. They note that, in cases where the rest of a building is structurally unsound, heavily altered or cannot feasibly meet modern building codes, saving the front face at least preserves a piece of the streetscape’s character.

Most heritage professionals agree that facadism shouldn’t be the first choice for conservation. The national *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* emphasizes retaining as much of the authentic material and spatial configuration as possible; city policies often echo this. Vancouver, for example, embeds the principle that facade-only preservation is a strategy of last resort — something to consider after sincere efforts to find solutions for a more substantial retention of the building.

Yet, it still occurs, even under these guidelines, due to engineering challenges, seismic upgrading issues, unexpected structural deterioration or the ever-present factor of cost and profitability. High land values and zoning that favour greater density can create strong incentives to build bigger and taller on a site than a small heritage structure would allow. In those cases, developers may argue that keeping just the facade is the only viable way to honour the past while meeting present needs.

The environmental stakes

Beyond the visual and cultural arguments, there’s an urgent practical reason to move away from the “demolish and build new” mindset: climate change. Both the construction and operation of buildings can have a massive environmental footprint. For decades, green building efforts focused on operational efficiency — things like better insulation, more efficient heating and cooling, and solar panels to reduce energy consumption. But today, experts recognize that embodied carbon — the carbon emissions associated with producing building materials and constructing buildings — is a critical part of the equation.

When a historic building is demolished, all the energy and carbon that were expended to create it are essentially thrown away, and the process of constructing a new building in its place releases a huge new pulse of carbon into the atmosphere.

According to a landmark study by Preservation Green Lab, “it takes between 10 to 80 years for a new building that is 30 per cent more efficient than an average-performing existing building to

LATREILLE ARCHITECTURAL PHOTOGRAPHY

overcome … the negative climate change impacts related to the construction process." In other words, even if you tear down an old building and replace it with a state-of-the-art green building, the carbon debt you incur from demolition and new construction can take generations to repay.

We simply don't have that kind of time, given urgent climate targets. It's broadly recognized among climate scientists and architects that reusing and upgrading our existing buildings is one of the quickest ways to cut carbon emissions. This insight is often summarized by the adage "the greenest building is the one that already exists."

How big a deal is embodied carbon? A recent World Economic Forum report points out that repurposing an existing building typically emits 50 to 75 per cent less CO_2 than constructing a new one of similar size. That aligns with other studies showing huge carbon savings from retrofit versus rebuild. Additionally, the United Nations Environment Programme has noted that the extraction and manufacturing of building materials (like cement, steel and glass) has been the fastest-growing source of global carbon emissions in the past 15 years. These extractive industries — mining ores, producing concrete, logging timber and so on — not only account for roughly half of the world's carbon emissions but also 90 per cent of biodiversity loss worldwide. Every time we choose to redevelop with all-new materials, we contribute to that environmental degradation. Reusing an existing structure means fewer new materials are needed, which helps curb resource extraction and the associated emissions.

Demolition isn't just a climate problem — it's a waste problem. Globally, construction and demolition waste is estimated to make up about 30 per cent of all solid waste generation. In Canada, construction, renovation and demolition waste

Thoughtful restoration has kept Vancouver's Pacific Central Station as a functioning transportation hub

SIMMONS LIMITED
BEDS
MATTRESSES
SPRINGS
PILLOWS
SIDEWALK CITIZEN
charbar

Above: Constructed as a mattress factory in 1912, the Simmons Building in the heart of Calgary's East Village is now a popular food and community destination

TOP AND BOTTOM: ©ROY OOMS PHOTOGRAPHY

Adaptive reuse means taking an old building and repurposing it for a new use, often different from the original one, while retaining its heritage character

accounts for approximately 35 per cent of landfill content countrywide. In short, more than a third of what we bury in landfills comes from tearing down and rebuilding our structures.

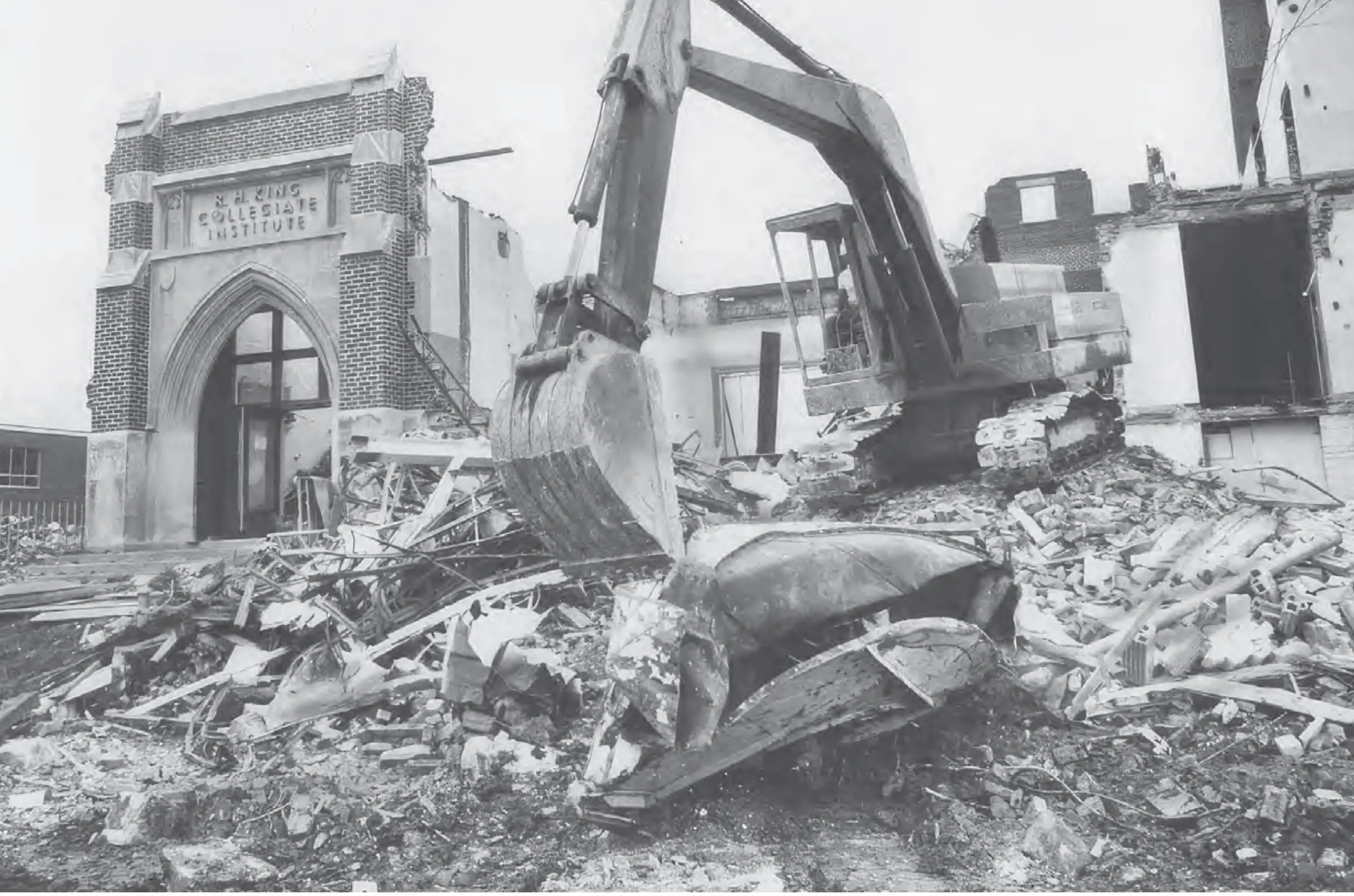
And much of it isn't innocuous rubble — it can include materials that are energy-intensive to produce and could be reused or recycled. Heritage BC reports that demolitions produce 20 to 30 times more waste material per square metre than either renovating or building new on a cleared site. Plus, a significant portion of demolition waste is potentially salvageable; studies indicate that, by using careful deconstruction and reuse strategies, up to 90 per cent of materials from some buildings can be salvaged or diverted from landfills. Currently, more than 75 per cent of global construction waste ends up in dumpsites — a number expected to reach 2.2 billion tonnes annually in the coming years.

Choosing adaptive reuse over demolition dramatically cuts down on this waste. Take, for example, the ongoing rehabilitation of the John Street Roundhouse in Toronto, built in 1929 to service passenger trains using nearby Union Station. Rather than demolish and rebuild, careful restoration and repurposing have diverted substantial construction waste from landfills and preserved embodied carbon locked into the heavy timber, brick and limestone structure. Refurbishing rather than demolishing would reduce the national waste stream by at least six per cent, according to Heritage BC — a not-insignificant environmental relief. It would also preserve precious materials; the National Trust for Canada notes that, each year, we throw away enormous quantities of old-growth timber and other high-quality materials because of unnecessary demolitions. Reuse truly is a form of resource conservation.

Energy efficiency versus "upfront" emissions

Some might wonder: If an old building is drafty and energy-inefficient, isn't it greener to replace it with a super-efficient new one?

It's true that older structures often need retrofits such as insulation to improve their operational energy use, and doing so is an important part of climate action. But that doesn't mean razing the building. The smartest climate strategy is usually to retrofit and reuse. The 2018 report *Better Buildings for a Low-Carbon Future* (House of Commons environment committee) emphasizes tracking and reducing embodied carbon as a key to reaching our climate goals. Essentially, to meet targets like Canada's commitment under the Paris Agreement, we must reduce both operational and embodied emissions. If we only focus



Only the archway of the original 1922 R.H. King Academy building in Toronto was spared from demolition in 1976

BOB OLSEN/TORONTO STAR

on making new buildings operationally efficient while continuing a cycle of disposable buildings, we miss half of the problem. The upfront carbon spike of new construction can negate decades of incremental efficiency gains.

By contrast, upgrading existing buildings can yield a double win: significantly lower upfront carbon and improved operational performance. Many traditional buildings have sustainable features built in — thick masonry walls that regulate temperature, operable windows for ventilation, durable materials that have lasted a century. With thoughtful retrofits such as sealing leaks and installing efficient lighting and HVAC, older structures can often approach the performance of new builds, especially when you consider the whole-life carbon footprint. And as a bonus, keeping an old building in use avoids the environmental damage from manufacturing new materials.

In short, from a sustainability standpoint, the math is heavily in favour of conservation and adaptive reuse. As the National Trust for Canada argues, accelerating building reuse is an essential climate action for our country — not just a quaint nod to history.

Breathing new life into heritage

Adaptive reuse means taking an old building and repurposing it for a new use — often quite different from what it was originally designed for — while retaining its heritage character. Instead of treating historic structures as obstacles to progress, adaptive reuse sees them as assets to be creatively integrated into our evolving cities. This approach can preserve not just the facade but also much or all of the original building fabric, celebrating its history even as it gains a new life and purpose.

It's also essentially a form of urban recycling: It taps into the value of existing assets instead of discarding them. The World Economic Forum notes that, in an era of rising climate risks and resource constraints, cities are turning to adaptive reuse as a powerful strategy to cut emissions and waste, and to embrace a circular economy model in the built environment. When paired with sustainability upgrades (retrofitting an old building with solar panels, for example), adaptive reuse can dramatically shrink a building's carbon footprint while also avoiding the hefty emissions of new construction.

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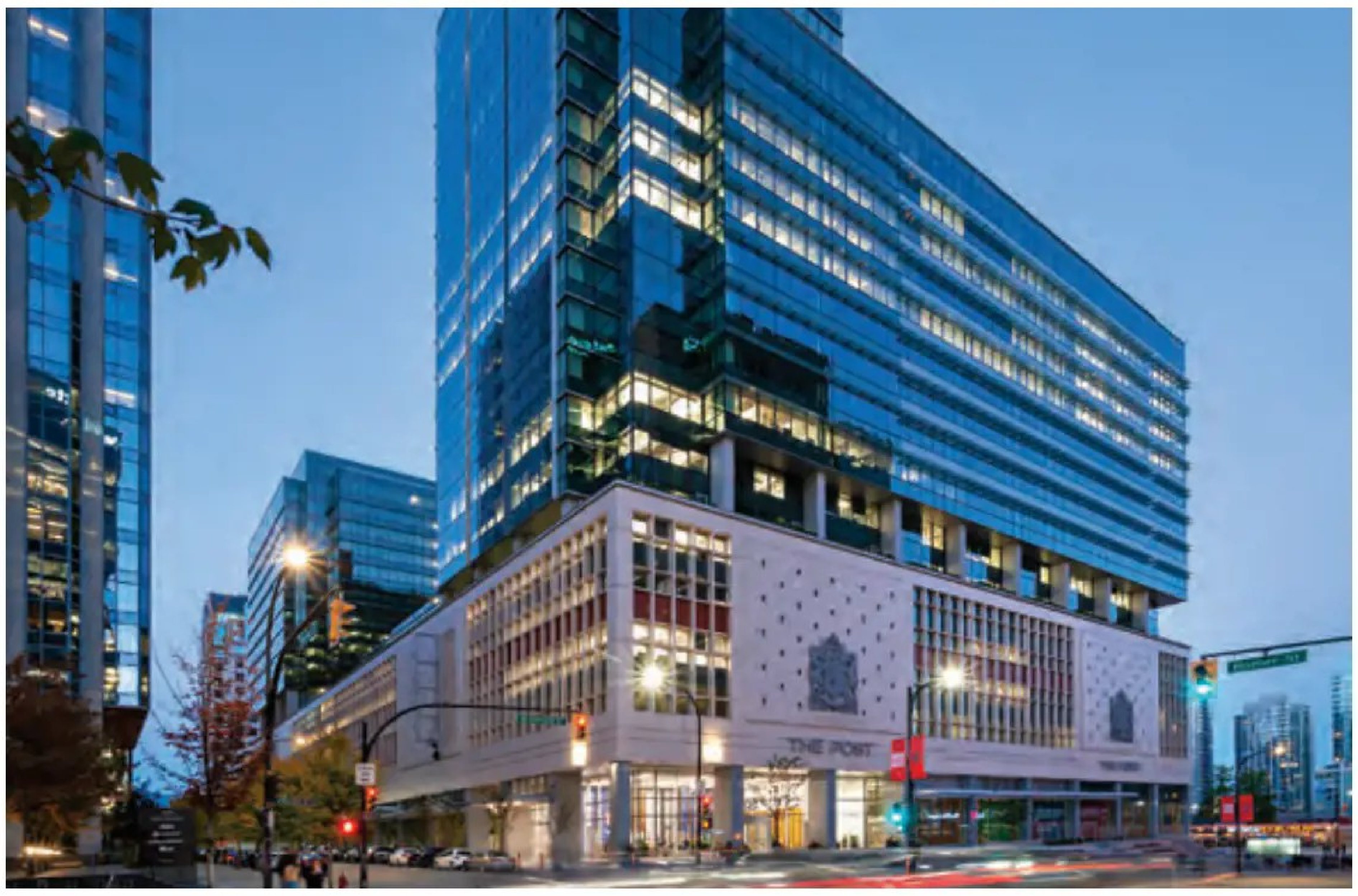


GOODERHAM & WORTS LIMITED

Top: The architecture of Winnipeg's Exchange District speaks to the city's key economic role in the West

Middle: The historic 1950s International Style Vancouver Post Office was recently redeveloped

Above: Toronto's Distillery Historic District offers a lively mix of cafés, studios, theatres and shops

It can also save money. With construction costs rising, a growing number of developers find that retrofitting can be 12 to 15 per cent cheaper than building new by avoiding expenses associated with demolition, site preparation and all-new materials.

Perhaps the greatest payoff of adaptive reuse is that it keeps the spirit of a place alive. A reused heritage building isn't a dead relic; it becomes a living part of the community again. This has intangible but profound benefits. Studies and experience have shown that heritage conservation contributes to community identity, stability and pride. When people can encounter historic buildings as parts of daily life — as their library, their market, their apartment building or office — it creates a link to the past that enriches the present. The stories embedded in the brick and beam remain part of the community's ongoing story. As one planner put it, it gives people a "sense of permanence and place" amid urban flux.

Far from being obstacles to progress, old buildings often become the centrepiece of revitalization. Aged industrial districts, warehouses, churches and schools have been successfully transformed into hubs of activity — incubators for arts, culture, small businesses and community events. Globally celebrated examples illustrate this: a disused elevated rail line in Manhattan turned into the High Line Park; a derelict power station in London became the Tate Modern art museum; and in Toronto, the historic Gooderham and Worts distillery was transformed into the Distillery Historic District, a lively pedestrian village of cafés, studios, theatres and shops.

These projects preserve the fabric of their cities while catalyzing local economies — spurring job creation, tourism and cultural spaces — and promoting well-being. Adaptive reuse often brings unique character-rich spaces that attract people and investment. From the perspective of urban development, it's a way to differentiate a city with authentic places rather than cookie-cutter new builds.

Crucially, adaptive reuse can also address practical needs like housing and community services. Many cities are now looking at the stock of underutilized older buildings (including office towers left half-empty by remote work) as opportunities to create affordable housing or community hubs through conversion. Repurposing vacant structures can help us tackle such problems as lack of housing, the need for child-care and health-care facilities or the desire for more cultural venues — all without starting from scratch.

TOP: ALAMY; CENTRE: THE POST; BOTTOM: ALAMY

Community needs

Why preserve historic buildings? If the aim is just to prevent a city from looking like anywhere in North America — to keep a quaint facade here and a pretty frontage there as a visual reminder of the past — then facadism might seem acceptable. But the goal is perhaps deeper: to maintain a physical connection between the community and its past; to retain the human scale and craftsmanship of earlier eras; and to ensure that historic places continue to contribute to our communal life. A dead facade, like a taxidermied trophy, does little to meet those goals. What communities need are historic spaces brought back to life — places where the past and present coexist and enrich each other.

Too often, historic preservation is misconstrued as turning old buildings into museums — freezing them in time with velvet ropes, to be admired but not touched or used. While museums and designated monuments certainly have their place for precious landmarks, most heritage buildings don't need to be ossified this way. In fact, communities thrive more when heritage is integrated into everyday life rather than cordoned off. A former factory that becomes a startup incubator (or a century-old firehall turned into a neighbourhood pub) will likely engage far more people than if that structure was only presented as an exhibit of itself. Reuse doesn't erase history, it layers new stories onto the old and invites people to experience heritage in a living, participatory manner. It's the difference between reading about a building on a plaque versus walking through its doors and making memories there.

When historic buildings are reused for community-benefitting purposes — like affordable housing, community centres, libraries, schools — it democratizes heritage. The sites remain in the public realm of experience, not just as elite condominiums with a historic veneer or as exclusive museums. This aligns with what the World Economic Forum observes: adaptive reuse can help address urban social needs by creating "affordable housing and essential community services," and by "cultivating vibrant places ... rooted in local identity" that empower communities. In other words, a city's heritage should be a shared asset, not a token facade hiding a private luxury tower, nor a locked-up artifact only opened on occasion.

Ethical heritage preservation is about use with integrity. It's not preservation versus development, but preservation as a foundation for sustainable and human-centred development. A building can honour its past and still have a bold new function. The key is thoughtful design and respect. Communities across Canada are voicing that they want their heritage buildings not standing as hollow backdrops but active and useful. This public sentiment can be seen in everything from local protests when a beloved old building is threatened to the enthusiasm for projects that give an old landmark a new lease on life. People feel a sense of ownership and pride in these places. They can point to a revitalized old theatre or train station and say, "That used to be abandoned, and now look — it's full of energy again." Such outcomes build civic pride and continuity.

In contrast, a facade that's grafted onto an unrelated new structure can sometimes feel like a cynical gesture — as if the soul of the place was sacrificed and only a mask remains. That tends not to evoke pride so much as a kind of bittersweet reminder of what was lost. The word "facadism" itself often comes with a negative connotation in popular discourse now precisely because people sense the hollowness it implies. A community might accept a facade-only preservation as better than nothing, but it's rarely celebrated.

As Donald Luxton warned about Vancouver's trend: "Do we want to become a city full of heritage tokens with little meaning?" The implied answer is no — we want real heritage, richly integrated with real meaning. **CH**

A century-old firehall that becomes a neighbourhood pub will engage far more people than if it were presented as an exhibit of itself

FEATURE

Prairie Jazz

Saskatchewan toes have been tapping to these tunes for more than a century

By Frank B. Edwards

The crowd that shivered its way into the warmth of Saskatoon's glamorous 1,200-seat Empire Theatre on March 11, 1918, was no doubt expecting the usual mix of music and comedy that was typical of a Monday-night vaudeville show in their town's stately auditorium.

As the neatly dressed couples and families settled in front of the stage's towering proscenium arch, they peered through the haze of cigarette and cigar smoke to the private boxes in search of local celebrities.

The real stars wouldn't come out until 8 p.m. and the patrons' impatience grew more audible as curtain time approached. Certainly, none of them realized how memorable their evening was to become.

Typically, the touring vaudeville shows that came to Saskatoon, Winnipeg and Calgary consisted of a dozen acts assembled in New York and sent across the continent for runs that lasted a few months. In recent times, the Empire Theatre — one of many stops on the Prairies' "breadbasket circuit" — had presented the singing Marx Brothers, dramatist Sarah Bernhardt and musical comedian Sophie Tucker, along with dozens of acrobats, jugglers and dancing animals.

But this night, the featured act was Minnie Burke, the self-styled "Skyrocket of Vaudeville." She had been lighting up stages large and small from New York to San Diego for a number of years with an entertaining mix of comedy, dancing and popular music by the likes of Irving Berlin.

Bob Moyer
Bob Moyer

Bob Moyer, at right on piano, played with several bands, including the Bob Moyer Band at this show in 1956

REGINA JAZZ SOCIETY

For almost two hours, the Saskatoon crowd applauded its way through the show until a trio of roller-skating contortionists finally made way for the diminutive star's Saskatchewan debut. But instead of her usual tinkling piano accompaniment, Minnie presented a hot new style of music from the US of A — jazz!

"A melodious racket" was the disapproving observation of one local newspaper critic who was unfamiliar with jazz's trademark syncopation, the bending of traditional metrical accents. To his and the audience's amazement, Minnie danced across the stage as her musicians (the Four Kings of Jazzcopation) graced it with a cacophony of horns, drums and piano, supplemented by stew kettles and frying pans.

Caught up by the lively rhythm, the American players twitched their shoulders and rolled their hips in time to the music. The Empire, a venue for opera, theatre (both amateur and professional), popular musicals and dancing horses, had never seen anything like it. No doubt it was the group's only appearance at the theatre.

A reporter at the *Regina Daily Post* suggested that jazz gave musicians "an opportunity of performing all kinds of weird gymnastic stunts." A month later, the *Tacoma Times* in Washington reported, "They make more noise than all the other artists on the program."

Jazz music had arrived on the Prairies whether audiences were ready or not. And today, though the golden age of jazz has given way to rock, pop, hip-hop and the ever-popular country music, homegrown Prairie bands work hard to keep the tradition alive.

In American cities, jazz evolved a dozen different ways, but Saskatchewan audiences made it clear early on that they just wanted to dance. While Prairie vaudeville houses soon made room for motion pictures, jazz music drifted off the stage and into dance halls, where couples could move to it with their feet. As dance floors got more crowded, small orchestras grew into big bands that could be better heard above the noise in the cavernous venues they played.

Bands such as Regina's Merry Melody Men and Saskatoon's Art Harmony Six battled it out in the 1920s and '30s for local dominance, while Prairie impresarios created dance halls and pavilions with room to move. On the shores of Last Mountain Lake, the Regina Beach Hotel's Terrace dance hall attracted hundreds of weekend patrons, who squeezed into excursion trains from Regina, 50 kilometres away.

Bob Moyer's bands ruled Saskatchewan jazz venues and dance floors

The art deco-style Trianon, built around the corner from Regina's city hall in 1929, featured full-length mirrors around its cushioned oak dance floor and Hollywood-style spotlights outside. Manitou Beach's Danceland — opened in 1928 and still operating today — had an arena-sized maple dance floor cushioned by 25 centimetres of horsehair for added spring. Moose Jaw had the Temple Gardens dance hall, built in 1921, to serve the musical offerings of its owners, pianist Trudy Temple and her husband, Cal.

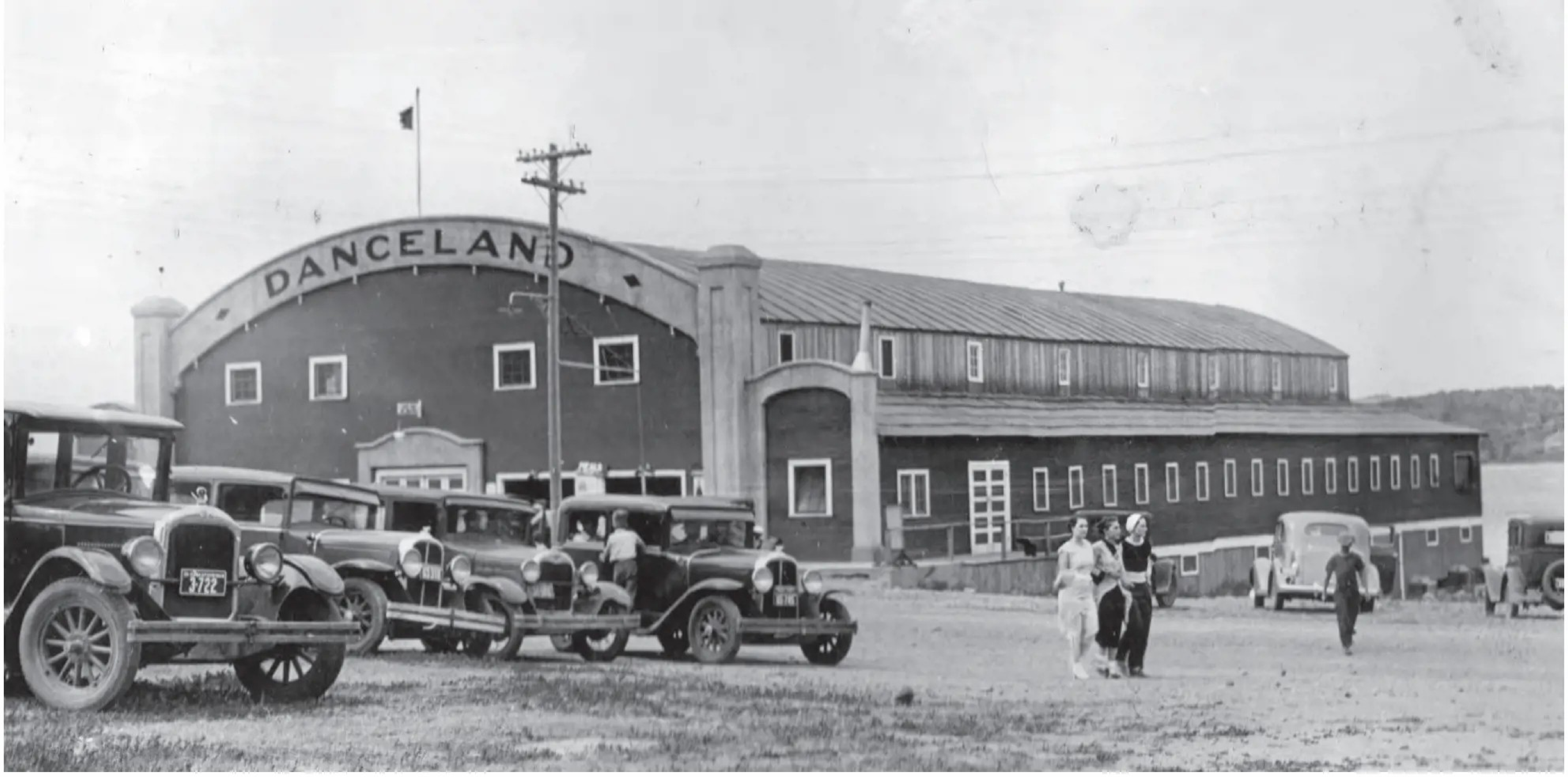
While big-name American acts did "Canadian time" with tours through clubs from Montreal to Vancouver, it was the homegrown jazz musicians who kept the Saskatchewan dance halls hopping long after the likes of Guy Lombardo, Duke Ellington and Glenn Miller had moved on down the train track.

One such bandleader was Bob Moyer, a mechanical engineer who made his professional debut in 1948 as tenor saxophonist with Herbie Spanier and his Boptet — complete with beret and floppy plaid bow tie. Part-time gigs that year with the group at Regina's Saskatchewan Hotel, the Trianon and even a senior citizens' residence didn't convince him to give up his day job, so he launched his own ensemble — the Hobby Band — consisting of musicians from various Regina groups. As their name implied, members weren't playing full time but rehearsed and performed for the love of music. Job demands kept the band mostly local, which, in turn, earned it a loyal following around the province for decades.

Robert Lloyd Moyer was born in 1924 in Craik, Sask., a rail stop between Regina and Saskatoon, where his father was a station agent and the founder of the town band. Moyer paid his way through the University of Saskatchewan in the early '40s by playing piano and saxophone on weekends, using his family train pass to travel free of charge to gigs from Regina to Saskatoon.

Over time, the Hobby Band evolved into the Bob Moyer Big Band, which attracted eager young recruits from local high schools as well as concert and dance fans. Its Saskatchewan roots also put it at the forefront of official ceremonies that needed a musical component. In 1965, the group was made Saskatchewan's official jubilee band for the province's 60th anniversary, and the band later represented the province with a concert at Expo 67 in Montreal; that same year, they performed for 20,000 people at the inauguration of Lake Diefenbaker, a 225-kilometre-long reservoir on the South Saskatchewan River, 100 kilometres south of Saskatoon, that was created in part by the construction of the Gardiner Dam. (Moyer spent a decade working as an engineer on the project during his career at the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration.) Band members, local players and jazz musicians passing through town regularly gathered at Moyer's Regina home for late-night jazz sessions.

In 1960, Moyer met a 24-year-old amateur singer and trained secretary named Pat Steel while playing in a Regina club. Shortly after Steel's audition, the band had a sultry-voiced



lead vocalist who also knew how to manage the books; 14 years later, Steel and Moyer married, cementing a relationship that made them jazz royalty in their home province. But Steel was already an integral part of the band long before they decided to tie the knot. "From the musicians' standpoint, Pat was doing the background work with Bob," says Brent Ghiglione, who joined the group in 1979.

The Bob Moyer Big Band and its various smaller ensembles ruled Saskatchewan's jazz clubs, concert halls and dance floors until its leader's death in 2005. The band regularly backed the shows of visiting celebrities, including Bob Hope, Rich Little, Rosemary Clooney and Bob Newhart. And it became a staple of the annual SaskTel Saskatchewan Jazz Festival that launched in 1987 and still presents 10 days of music every summer in Saskatoon.

Moyer died of cancer at age 81, leaving a musical legacy that nurtured generations of musicians and thousands of toe-tapping fans. Many of the people he played with got together soon after his death to celebrate Moyer at a farewell jazz session at the Hotel Saskatchewan. Steel retired in 2013 and died on New Year's Day in 2023.

Today, the Bob Moyer Big Band continues to perform for audiences under the direction of Ghiglione, an associate professor of music at the University of Regina, who fondly recalls his introduction to the jazz musician's life. "I was just 18, and Bob gave me a chance of a lifetime to hit the high notes," he says. "Bob and Pat were mentors, teachers, managers and overall kind, gentle guides to all of us young musicians." **CH**

Visit **CanadasHistory.ca/PrairieJazz** to hear some tunes!

Top: Danceland in Manitou Beach, Sask., built next to salty Little Manitou Lake, is the last of three dance halls once located in that community

Above (from left): David Dick, Trent Reschny, Donny Kennedy and Carter Powley — all of whom have played with the Bob Moyer Big Band — with the Regina Jazz Orchestra

TOP: REGINA JAZZ SOCIETY; BOTTOM: SAM FLAMONT

Status in death as seen at the Eaton family mausoleum in Toronto's Mount Pleasant Cemetery

BOB OLSEN/TORONTO STAR

FEATURE

Death's Door

Victorian cemeteries and the rise of the funeral business in Canada

By Valery Philip

In the late fall, Cobourg Union Cemetery's brooding and romantic Victorian death monuments clustered upon soft berms match the sombre, grey mood of the season. When a quiet rain falls and the light grows dim, centuries-old spruce and cedar boughs seem to weep upon the monumental tombstones with their heavy boughs. In midsummer, though, visitors may enjoy an easy breeze blowing between the grave markers and greenery. This calm, peaceful atmosphere presents a better understanding of why Victorian-era Canadians considered this space a park for refreshment and reflection, rather than a necropolis.

When Canada became independent from British rule in 1867, we were a growing nation of immigrants. Nearly one-third of the total population were of French origin, a smaller portion English, Welsh, Irish and Scottish. The remaining 2,600,000 people were born here, some with families that had been settled for generations, but the influence of Europe remained strong, including the style and structure of cemeteries.

That same year, in the small but flourishing town of Cobourg, Ont., located between Toronto and Kingston, a new era of burial traditions began. Cobourg Union Cemetery was of groundbreaking design, modelled after the garden cemeteries of Europe, which were built outside of the urban core and landscaped to offer what Cayley Bower, a researcher from Western University in London, Ont., says was "as much a desirable space for the living as a resting place for the dead." With its sweeping berms, planted spruce trees and a trickling brook, Cobourg Union Cemetery reflected what Bower says was Victorian-era Canadian nationalism — an idealization of what it meant to conquer the wild.

COBOURG UNION CEMETERY

Cobourg Union Cemetery was meant to be a pleasant place for the living to visit the dead

COBOURG UNION CEMETERY

A cemetery is born

As did most garden cemeteries of the time, Cobourg Union Cemetery opened in response to the need to inter individuals outside of the growing urban core. Before the advent of large garden-style cemeteries, people were buried under church floors or in crowded church yards. As urban space became a premium and concern about unhygienic burial practices grew, the town's leaders created a board for a newly envisioned cemetery. According to Bower, this sentiment was felt across the country, in particular in Kingston, Ont., where one of the country's first garden cemeteries was opened.

"As the urban burial grounds grew more crowded and residential housing expanded around the graveyard, residents wanted an alternative to urban burial that came in the form of the garden-style cemetery, which represented a new and modern approach to interment," Bower wrote in her 2017 thesis, *Dying to Be Modern: Cataraqui Cemetery, Romanticism, Consumerism, and the Extension of Modernity in Kingston, Ontario*.

The board of Cobourg Union Cemetery created a non-denominational, non-profit cemetery so that all residents would be assured a final resting place. Family members were originally responsible for the care of the gravesites, and it was a weekend tradition to hike the four kilometres north to the cemetery, enjoy a picnic by Pratt's Pond on the west side and do any grass cutting around their respective family tombstones.

This new idea of the cemetery as a pleasant experience lay in great contrast to the crowded urban cemeteries that, Bower recounts, became "a space for [the] disposal of household refuse, a grazing space for livestock, and a secluded spot to engage in drinking and prostitution after dark." Additionally, urban cemeteries were vulnerable to vandalism in the form of knocking over headstones and stealing the iron fences for scrap metal.

The 40-minute walk to Cobourg Union Cemetery deterred such spontaneous misbehaviour and was an ideal solution to provide an enjoyable and appealing place for the living to visit the dead. As the cemetery grew with additional burial sites sprinkled across its expanse, professional maintenance was required and families were asked to pay an annual fee to cover the cost.

In professional hands

As science and medicine advanced toward the end of the Victorian era, the case for hygiene introduced embalming methods in the funerary practice, replacing the personal and community involvement in handling the dead. This shift ushered in what Gillian Poulter, a historian with the Canadian Historical Association, refers to as the "traditional funeral, [which] includes the transportation of the body to a funeral home, where it is embalmed, washed, dressed, placed in a casket, enhanced with cosmetics and made available for viewing by family and friends."

The transition was not immediately accepted in a society where there was a fear of being buried alive, says Poulter. Some people still wanted to handle the body of their loved one themselves, having it rest at home to see signs of decay before the burial. This also provided an opportunity for the community to gather for remembrance, which was spread over a number of days. However, events such as the sinking of the *Titanic*, which required preserving bodies for identification, and the 1918 Influenza Pandemic, when people feared contracting the disease from the dead, made embalming more popular; thus, a new and lucrative industry was born. Soon, funeral directors were accused of overcharging customers for embalming and a long list of goods and services they insisted were required for a civilized burial.

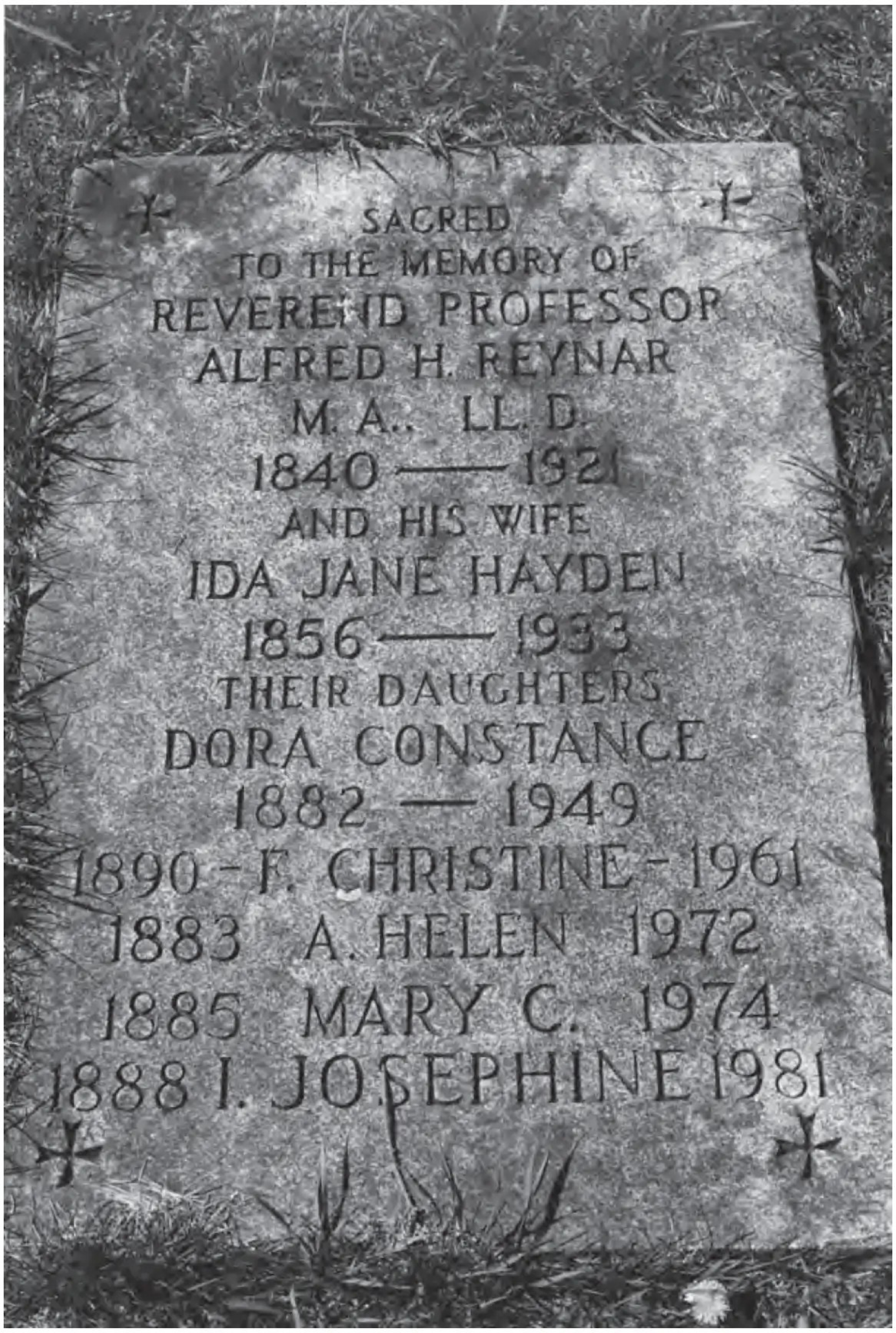
The traditional funeral also became an elaborate display to commemorate the early Canadians who romanticized the heroic struggles of their nation. These deceased descendants of heroes were memorialized by elaborate funerary and professional burial treatments, topped off with a magnific burial marker for all to see. These markers, often rich in cultural significance and meaning, reflected the upright religious and moral social norms of the time.

Status in death

At Cobourg Union Cemetery, many large gravestones are prominently engraved with the name of a male figure, followed by the name of his spouse and finally the children, if any, in smaller letters around the sides of the monument. Sometimes, small nameplates were set in the ground, creating a perimeter of family exclusivity.

One of the Cobourg cemetery monuments looks like the Stanley Cup, with its bowl on

> The transition was not immediately accepted in a society that feared being buried alive



A family gravestone with the name of the male figure, followed by his spouse and their children

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM

Top: Monuments like these in Cobourg Union Cemetery reflected status in death

Above: Uniformity later became the new aesthetic, even in military sections

a cylindrical stand; both are made of black granite, patinaed with time. The Stanley Cup is, of course, a symbol of being the best team in the National Hockey League. In the minds of early Canadian settlers striving to make their mark, this monument would certainly have been a grand gesture. According to Bower, by the end of the 19th century, burial had become "theatre for a final staging of social position." Elaborate funeral monuments were expensive and reflected the success of those Canadians who were able to conquer the wild and succeed in a new nation.

Returning to community

The decades that followed the 1901 death of Queen Victoria would see two world wars bookending a great economic depression and sweeping social transformations. People distanced themselves from the Victorian era and were interested in new innovations and technologies, along with a cleaner aesthetic — think art deco and mid-century architecture and furniture. This change was reflected in the introduction of the lawn cemetery, where wide-open spaces carpeted in trim green grass replaced the ornamental trees, shrubs and monuments of the Victorian cemeteries.

Extravagant mourning practices gave way to simpler, more restrained forms of commemoration. In British Columbia, the rise of a new suburban middle class after the Second World War brought with it a desire to avoid the constant reminders of mortality found in traditional cemeteries. Instead, there was a growing preference for cleaner, more orderly burial grounds that blended into the suburban landscape.

Modern cemeteries, like Burnaby, B.C.'s Ocean View Burial Park, established in 1924, introduced strict guidelines on the size and shape of monuments. Tall, imposing headstones were no longer welcome, considered both impractical and visually outdated. In their place were flat or mid-size markers, chosen for ease of maintenance and a more unified aesthetic. Ornamental family plots and iron enclosures were phased out and uniformity became a defining feature. This new approach reflected broader social ideals: Cemeteries were now more inclusive public spaces, where modest markers served as equalizers between classes. Even in military sections, this design ethos emphasized national unity over individual distinction. As headstones grew smaller, epitaphs became shorter — often listing only a name and the dates of birth

TOP: SIMONP CC BY-SA 3.0. BOTTOM: KINGSTON AND AREA ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS, ART GALLERIES + HISTORIC SITES

These days, cemeteries are recognized for their historical and cultural value

MOUNT PLEASANT CEMETERY

Toronto's Mount Pleasant Cemetery attracts hikers, bird watchers, guided walking tours and more

SHUTTERSTOCK

and death. In many cases, words like "death" and "dead" were omitted entirely, signalling a cultural movement toward distancing oneself from the finality of mortality.

Significance of cemeteries today

These days, cemeteries are recognized for their historical and cultural value, particularly when it comes to community record keeping. Monument inscriptions provide vital information on family lineages, cultural customs and demographic trends, such as average age at death during specific time periods.

But their tranquil beauty is also appreciated. Toronto's impressive Mount Pleasant Cemetery attracts hikers, snowshoers and bird watchers alongside guided walking tours — evolving uses that reflect a growing recognition of cemeteries as peaceful multi-use spaces that blend memory, nature and community engagement.

A well-maintained urban cemetery can provide a peaceful, reflective atmosphere that promotes stress relief and contributes to overall mental well-being. Mature trees provide shade while offering habitats for birds and other wildlife displaced by ongoing urban development. In this way, Canadian cemeteries contribute to both the environmental sustainability and the livability of modern cities, serving as quiet sanctuaries of green space within densely built landscapes.

It seems that, once again, cemeteries are places for the living as well as the dead — open-air museums that tell the stories of the culture, history and social meaning of a place. **CH**

THE
PROVINCE
OF
CANADA
BY
JAMES WYLD
GEOGRAPHER TO THE
and
HRH PRINCE ALB
CHARING CROSS EAST
Boz

Portrait of Charles Dickens sketched during his tour of the United States and the Province of Canada

FEATURE

Full of Hope and Promise

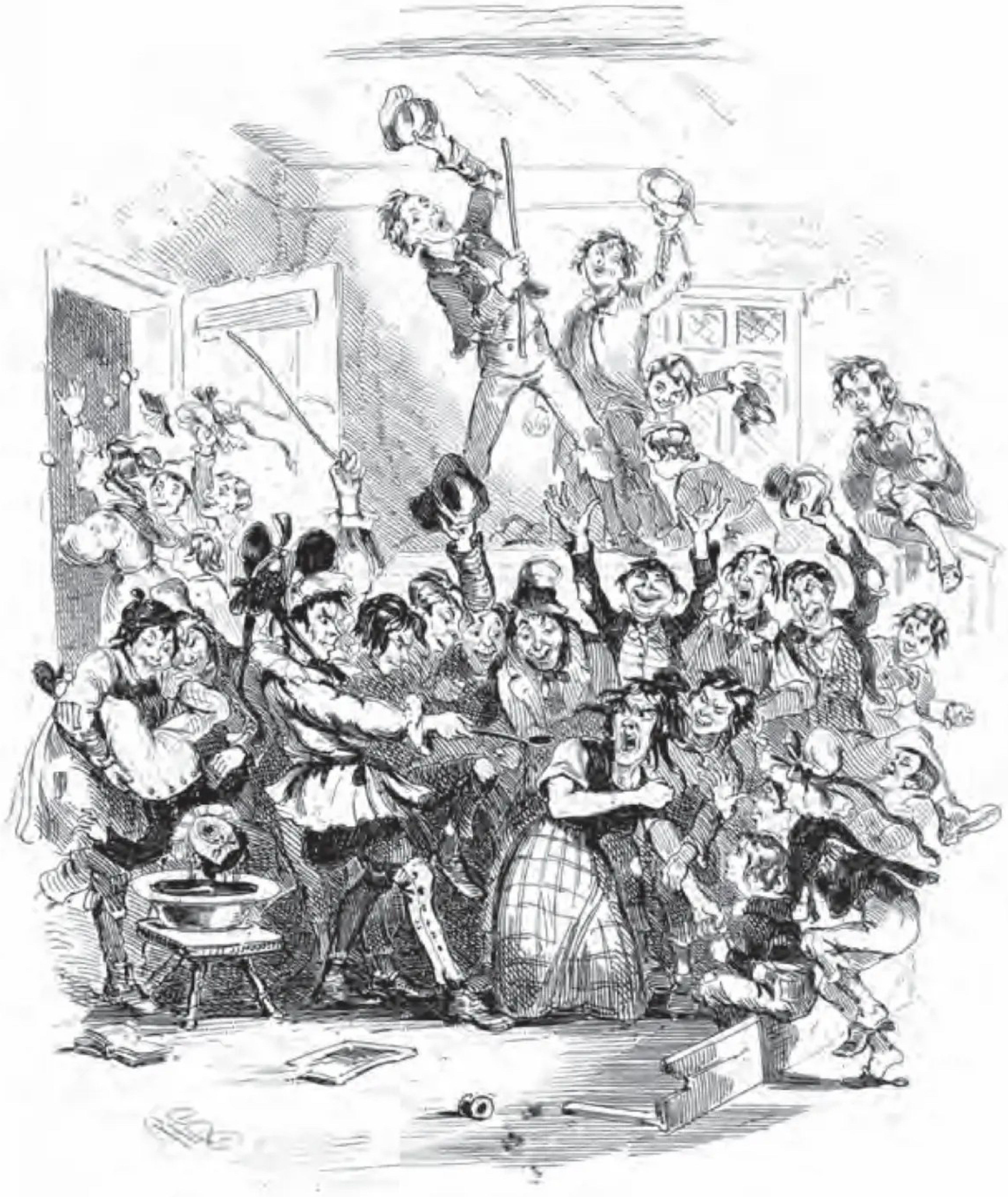
Charles Dickens visited pre-Confederation Canada. Here's what he found

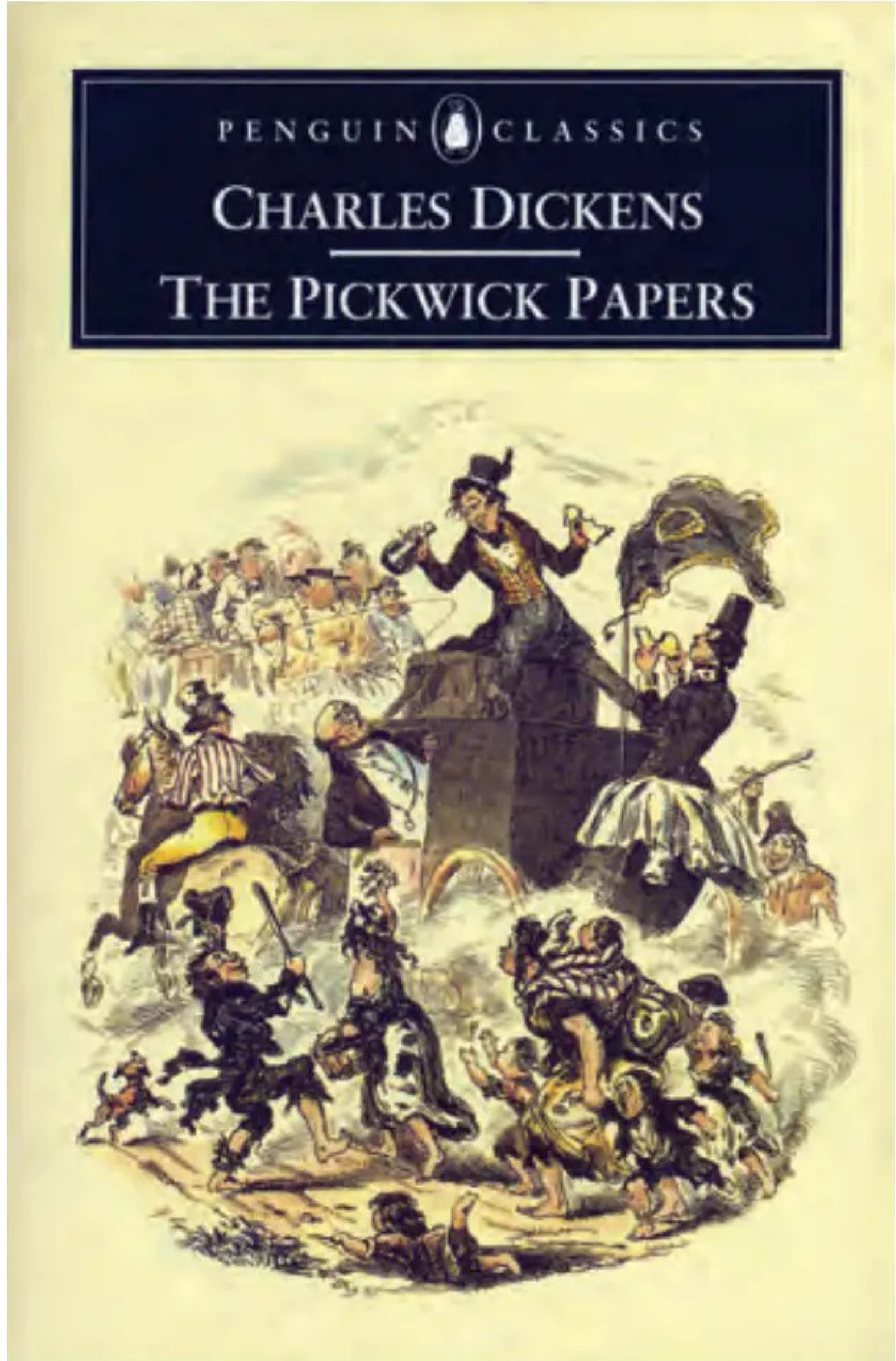
By Bill Moreau

Charles Dickens was afraid to turn in. That morning in Liverpool, he and his wife, Catherine, had boarded the steam packet *Britannia*, bound for Boston, and now, despite the general air of festivity on board, Dickens viewed the upcoming 12-day run across the North Atlantic with dread. He crept below deck at midnight and found his wife already in "silent agonies." The writer soon felt a chill — the beginnings of the seasickness that confined him to the cabin for the duration of the voyage. It was early January 1842; the couple had just celebrated Christmas in London with their four young children and would be away from home for almost six months while they toured America.

Dickens was just shy of 30 when they embarked, and it had been six years since he'd published his first book, *Sketches by Boz*, a collection of essays, short stories and sketches that came out under the pen name "Boz." Dickens soon turned his hand to longer fiction, and by the time he went to America, he'd authored five novels, including *The Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. Now, he felt, it was time to write something in a different genre.

ALAMY





Above: Hablot Knight Browne illustrated many of Dickens' novels, including this image from *Nicholas Nickleby*

Left: *The Pickwick Papers* is Dickens' first novel

For almost a year, he'd toyed with the idea of visiting the U.S. to produce a travel narrative. Bookshops did brisk business in volumes of Englishmen's impressions of America, and he was eager to tour the young republic and add his story to shelves. His reportage and fiction were animated by a deep interest in social inequality, legal systems and political institutions, as well as a desire to remedy abuses, and he foresaw that the U.S. would offer him a fertile field for these preoccupations. Dickens was right; *American Notes for General Circulation*, the resulting narrative, instantly became a classic of the genre.

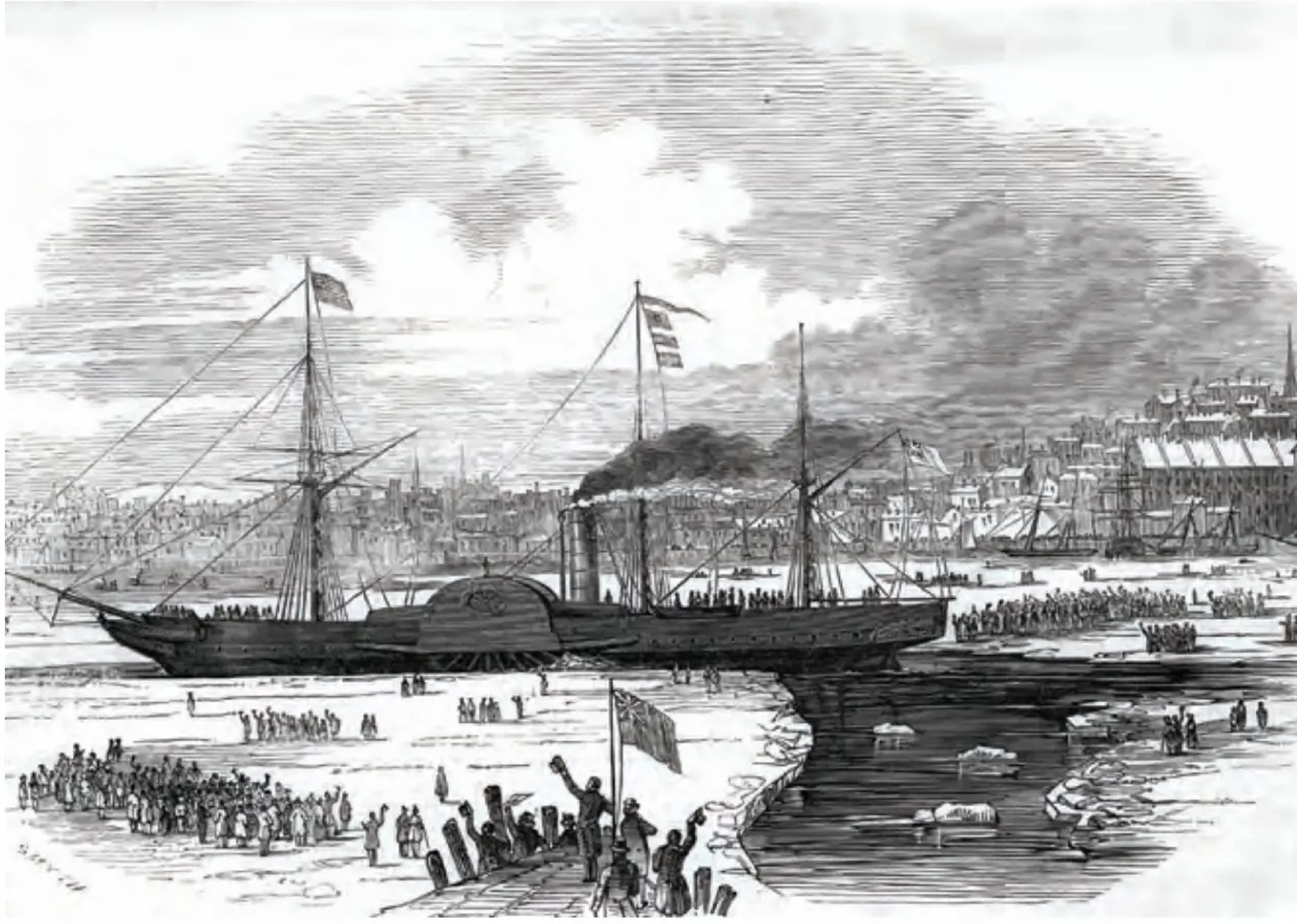
Less well known is that Dickens' visit to America included a substantial Canadian sojourn. The portion of the trip that took him north of the border has always been overshadowed by his time in the U.S., both in the published travel narrative itself and in subsequent writing about the author. Although Charles and Catherine spent about six weeks in Canada, the colony is described in a mere half chapter of the 18-chapter *American Notes* (a "brisk account of some Canadian cities," as Sacheverell Sitwell writes in his introduction to a modern edition of the book), and the episode merits a scant three pages in Peter Ackroyd's magisterial 1,000-page biography, *Dickens*.

But the Canadian visit was a significant episode, both for Dickens personally, as it served as a respite and counterpoint to his grand public tour of the U.S., and as a historical testament to the state of the colony in a pivotal period in its development. In fact, Dickens set foot in British North America even before he arrived in the U.S., when the *Britannia* slipped into Halifax to deliver and pick up mail. On Jan. 19, as the steamship approached the Eastern Passage, it ran aground on a bank of mud. Dickens recounts how an officer piloted a boat to the shore and returned with "a tolerably tall young tree, which he had plucked up by the roots" to prove that land had been reached.

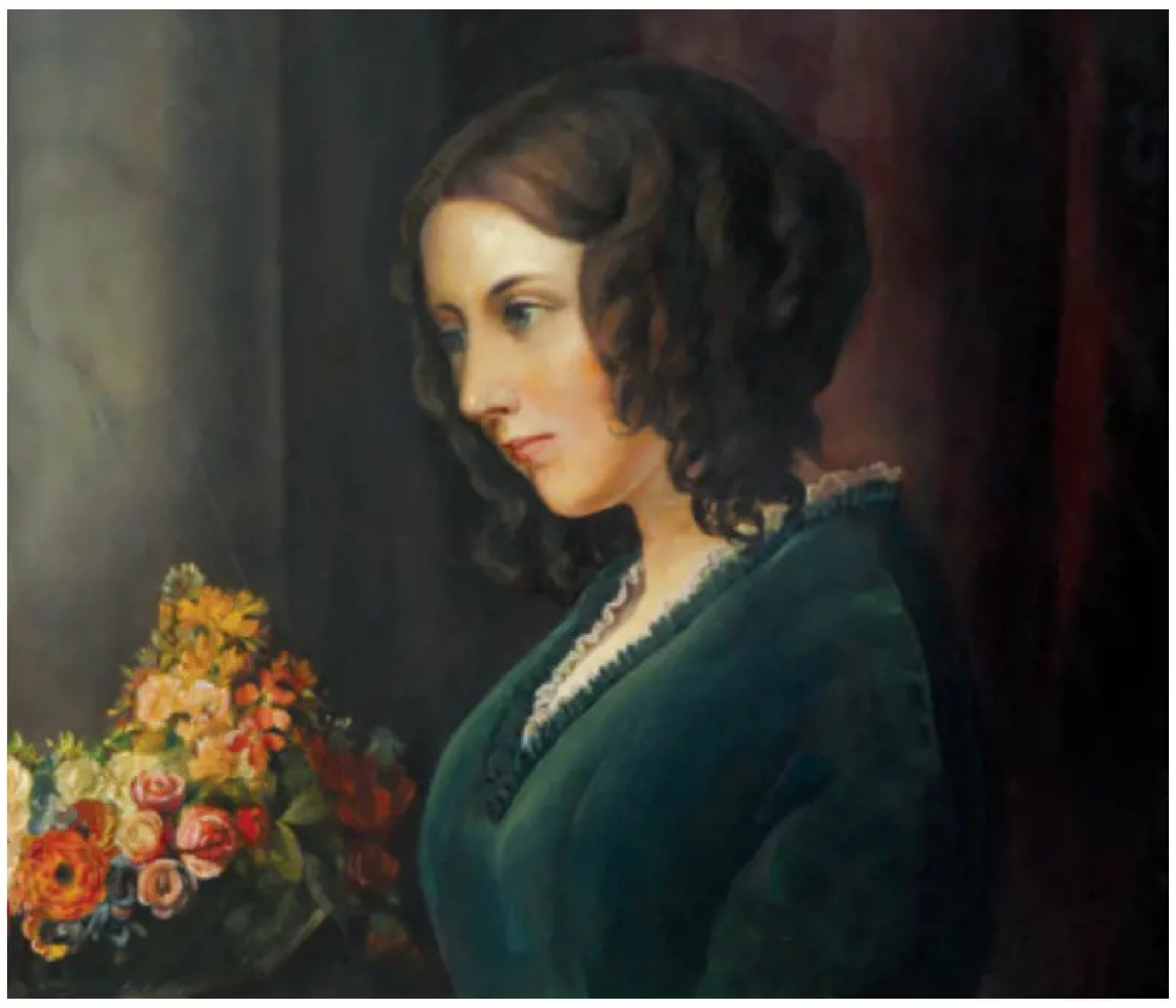
The next morning, the ship steamed into Halifax Harbour, and Dickens soon received a taste of the adulation that would await him in the United States. Joseph Howe, speaker of the Nova Scotia House of Assembly and future premier, jumped aboard, calling Dickens' name and hauling him off to the city. Referring to himself with one of his favourite nicknames, Dickens later writes to his close friend (and later biographer) John Forster, "I wish you could have seen the crowds cheering the inimitable

ALAMY

> “I wish you could have seen the crowds cheering the inimitable in the streets”



Above: This woodcut print of the steam packet *Britannia* heading out from Boston was published in the *Illustrated London News* in 1847. The paper’s reportage opened up the eyes of the Victorian middle class to life in London and abroad



Right: A portrait of Catherine Dickens, circa 1847

TOP: ALAMY; BOTTOM: BRIDGEMAN

in the streets ... judges, law-officers, bishops, and law-makers welcoming the inimitable.” The writer attended the opening of Nova Scotia’s Assembly in Province House and remarked on the affinity between British North America and his mother country, noting that the British Parliament’s forms were followed so closely “that it was like looking at Westminster through the wrong end of a telescope.”

After a seven-hour layover, Dickens continued on to the main purpose of his trip. He began with a tour of the Eastern Seaboard, making his way through Boston, New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., to great acclaim, and satisfying his interest in public institutions, industrial development and forms of government. In Washington, Dickens made a key change in his travel plans; to avoid the “contemplation of slavery,” he reoriented himself west, rather than south. The couple travelled by canal boat and paddle steamer to Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, St. Louis and the Illinois prairie, where they saw the rapid opening of the midwestern states. But they grew increasingly weary and homesick, and by mid-April, it was time to turn back east and make their way to British North America. Tellingly, as Dickens recounts that decision, he states, “we were moving towards Niagara and home.”

Dickens excused himself from drawing any comparisons between the U.S. and the British colonies in Canada, stating in *American Notes*, “I shall confine myself to a very brief account of our journeyings in the latter territory.” He gives the impression of a man exhausted by his travels, disillusioned by what he had seen, and seeking rest and respite. Paradoxically, as he travelled by train to what he called the “English side” of Niagara Falls, he entered a land that was being transformed.

Five years before Dickens came to British North America, Upper Canada and Lower Canada had endured violent rebellions against the Tory political order. In their aftermath, an Act of Union brought the Canadas together as the United Province of Canada, and the inaugural election for the colony’s new legislature was held the year before the couple’s visit. A network of British Army garrisons maintained order and Dickens noted that “British officers ... form a large portion of the society of every town.” As he and Catherine travelled through Canada, they moved in the orbit of these posts, often hosted and feted by their officers. French Canadians were seen from a distance, and Indigenous Peoples not at all.

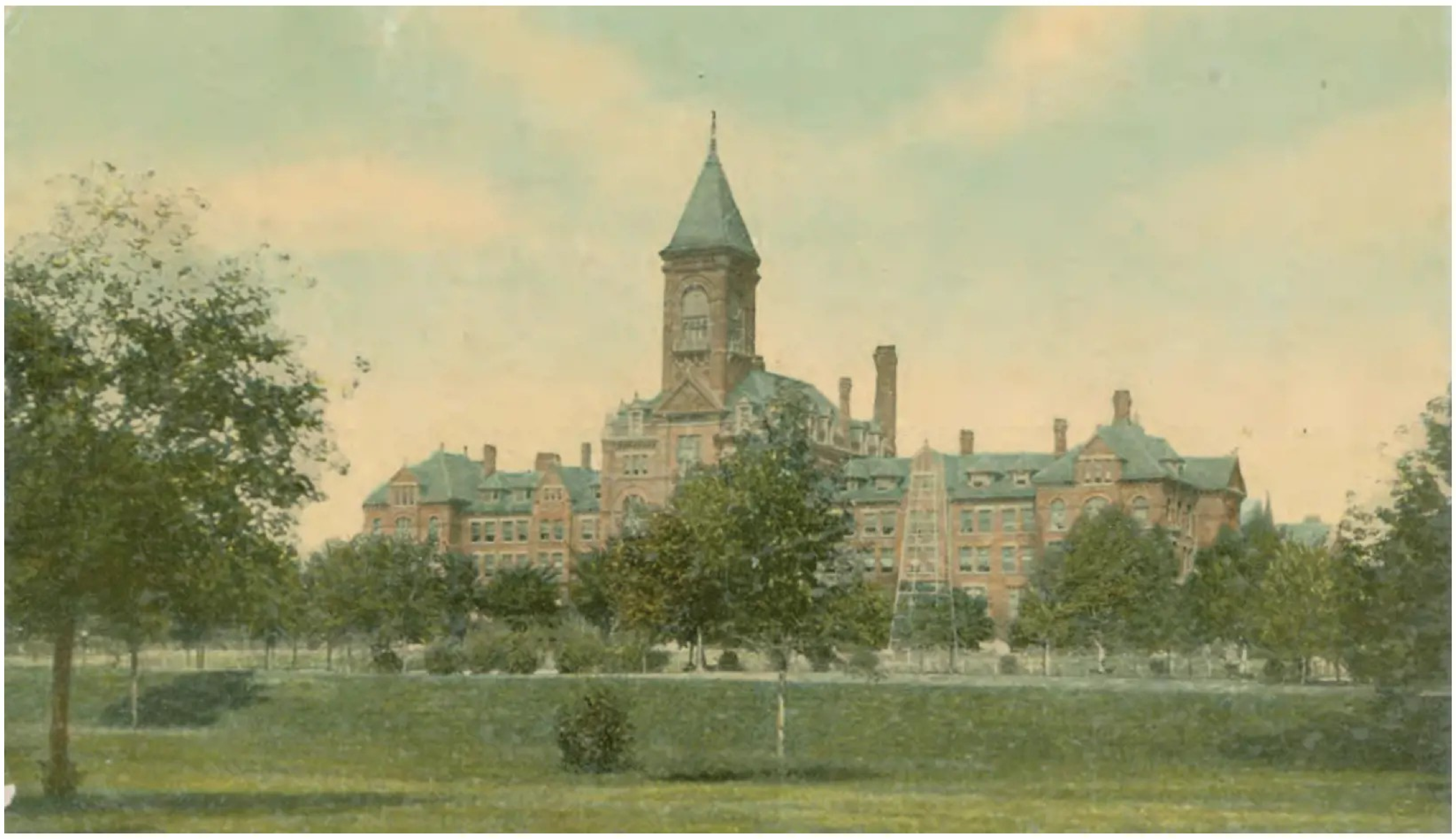
“The wild and rabid Toryism of Toronto is, I speak seriously, appalling”

Niagara was Dickens’ base for 10 days, time spent in contemplation of the falls, which he viewed from different locations and in a variety of weather conditions. In the roaring shadow of the great cataract, Dickens found calm and tranquillity and recovered a sense of his inner life. For the weary author, Niagara was “Enchanted Ground,” where, according to Ackroyd, he regained “that peace of wonder and self-communing that had been snatched from him in America.”

From Niagara, the couple proceeded downstream to Queenston, Ont., where they saw the ruined Brock’s Monument, which a disgruntled former rebel had recently blown up. A steamboat took them across Lake Ontario to Toronto. Dickens found the city “full of life and motion, bustle, business and improvement,” and compared it to a thriving English country town. He commented approvingly on Upper Canada College, the “good stone prison” and newly opened University Avenue, and was the guest of honour at a banquet thrown by John Beverley Robinson, chief justice of Canada West and key member of the Family Compact.

But Dickens also lamented Toronto’s rampant political and religious sectarianism, as Tory faced off against Reformer, and Protestant against Catholic. In a letter to Forster, Dickens confides, “The wild and rabid Toryism of Toronto is, I speak seriously, appalling.” In *American Notes*, he recounts an incident that had occurred during the inaugural election for Canada’s Legislative Assembly in 1841. Toronto’s two Tory candidates had been defeated by a pair of Reformers, and during the victors’ celebratory parade on King Street, shots had been fired into the crowd from the Coleraine Inn, killing a man. The murder was unsolved, and Dickens alludes to the allegiance of the assailant with an oblique reference to the flag that had shielded him from being apprehended: “Of all the colours in the rainbow, there is but one which could be so employed; I need not say that the flag was orange.”

Dickens fed his interest in criminal justice during their next stop: Kingston, Ont., the new capital of the Province of Canada. He visited the penitentiary, where he met with a young female rebel who had been imprisoned for horse theft during the rebellion. The novelist was clearly taken with this figure with “quite a lovely face” who, often disguised as a boy, had borne secret messages across the Niagara River and who now



This illustration of Upper Canada College is circa 1905. The school was founded in 1829 by Sir John Colborne, who was then Upper Canada’s lieutenant-governor

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY

looked out at him through her prison bars with "a lurking devil in her bright eye."

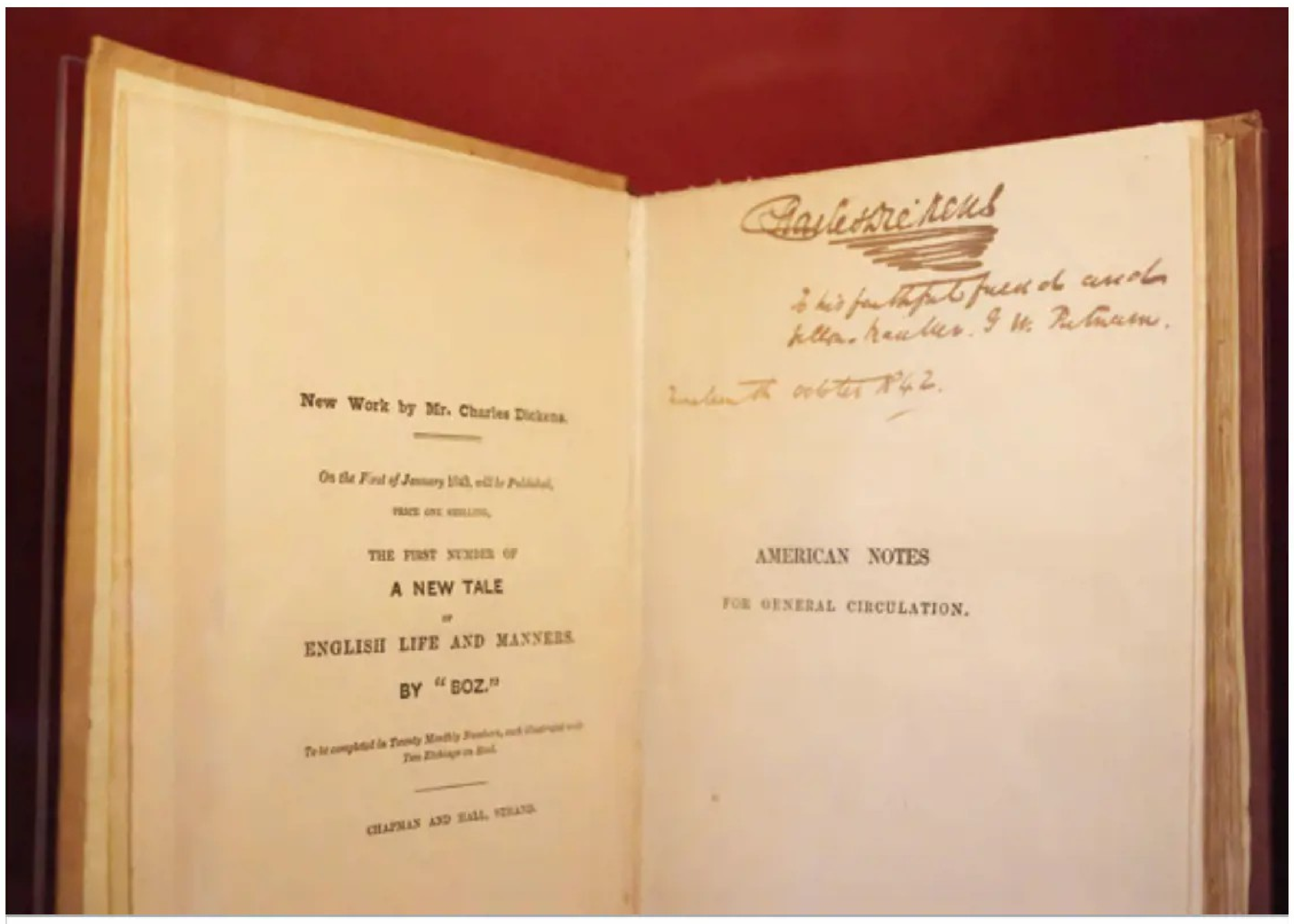
Travelling via steamboat and stagecoach, the couple then made their way down the St. Lawrence to Montreal. As he approached the city, Dickens looked out upon a "pleasant and well-cultivated country, perfectly French in every respect," noticing French signs, wayside shrines and crucifixes, clergy in the streets, and the bright-red sashes of the men and wide-brimmed straw hats of the women. He and his wife spent almost three weeks in what was then Canada's largest city, lodging at Rasco's Hotel (still operating as Maison Rasco), but Montreal leaves little trace in *American Notes*. Dickens admired Notre-Dame Basilica, then under construction, with "two tall spires, of which one is yet unfinished," and noted that immigrants grouped by the hundreds on the public wharves, but his attention was soon drawn beyond sight-seeing, as he rekindled his love of the theatre. The author threw himself heartily into the life of the Garrison Amateurs, a troupe made up of officers of the British military post at Montreal. Dickens not only served as director, prop manager and set designer but also took the stage himself. A set of three plays was performed on two nights — two light comedies, *A Roland for an Oliver* and *Past Two O'Clock in the Morning*, and a farce, *Deaf as a Post*, in which Catherine Dickens took on a minor role.

Their Montreal stay was broken by a brief excursion to Quebec City, where Dickens was "charmed by its interest and beauty." As he toured the old city, cliffs and Plains of Abraham, he recalled the events of the 1759 battle and was especially taken by the Wolfe-Montcalm Monument, "[w]hich perpetuates the memory of both brave generals." In *American Notes*, the visit to Quebec concludes with a picturesque description of the countryside along the St. Lawrence, viewed from the former Parliament Building of Lower Canada, and this "brightest and most enchanting picture" serves as a fitting bookend to the view of Niagara with which the Canadian tour had begun.

Leaving Montreal at the end of May, Dickens and his wife took Canada's first railway to St-Jean-sur-Richelieu. There, the British officers of the local garrison saw them off, before they travelled by steamboat down the Richelieu River and into Vermont. As he steams across the boundary, Dickens concludes with a paean to the rising country, lauding a nation "advancing quietly; old differences settling down, and being fast forgotten; public feeling and private enterprise alike in a sound and wholesome state; nothing of flush and fever in its system, but health and vigour throbbing in its steady pulse; it is full of hope and promise."

Canada had brought health and vigour back to Dickens himself and provided the writer and his wife with an interlude of much-needed relief from the trials of American travel. By the end of June, they were back home in London, reunited with family and friends. At Dickens' insistence, they travelled home under sail, rather than by steam. CH

Read about the experience of Charles and Catherine's son Francis as a North-West Mounted Police officer at CanadasHistory.ca/FrankDickens



New Work by Mr. Charles Dickens.

On the First of January 1843, will be Published,

THE FIRST NUMBER OF

A NEW TALE

ENGLISH LIFE AND MANNERS.

BY "BOZ."

CHAPMAN AND HALL, STRAND.

Charles Dickens

To his faithful friend and excellent fellow-traveller. G. W. Putnam.

Fourteenth October 1842.

AMERICAN NOTES

FOR GENERAL CIRCULATION.

Above: Dickens signed this copy of *American Notes for General Circulation* with flourish for George Washington Putnam, his personal secretary on his trip to the United States and the Province of Canada

ALAMY

A FINAL NOTE

Dickens' travel narrative, *American Notes for General Circulation*, with its criticisms of slavery, mob rule, violence and vulgarity, was published in October 1842. He followed that with his sixth novel, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, which began to appear in serial form in December. Even more than *American Notes*, this work, with its unflattering portrait of American frontier society, led to deep and lasting resentment in the U.S. By 1867, the year of Canadian Confederation, feelings in the U.S. had softened enough that Dickens was able to return for a second, triumphant tour of northeastern cities. Aside from a brief excursion from Buffalo to Niagara Falls, Canada was not included on the itinerary.

Métis magic

A cultural and interpretive centre in Central Alberta celebrates the children of the fur trade

By Jennifer Bain

Before paddling down the North Saskatchewan River in a giant communal canoe, we gather on the shore to practise singing in unison. "*J'entends le moulin, tique, tique, taque,*" we sing, first slowly, then at increasingly faster paces. "*J'entends le moulin, tique, tique, taque.*"

We aren't just belting out a French-Canadian folk song about a mill wheel, we're imagining how it felt to be voyageurs transporting furs and trade goods for the Hudson's Bay Company. Repetitive verses taught men from Scotland, England and France to work together.

The voyageurs measured distance in song and mapped the rivers with their voices, artist Danielle LaRose explains as we paddle between Métis Crossing, about 90 minutes northeast of Edmonton, and Victoria Settlement Provincial Historic Site. Those "beautiful, hard-working men with their beautiful voices" impressed the First Nations women they passed, she says.

"I always consider our waterways to be the matchmakers of the

Daily seasonal experiences, like snowshoeing, reflect Métis life on the land

INDIGENOUS TOURISM ALBERTA_ROAM CREATIVE

CREATIVE_DESTINATION CANADA

“The river is still the one that’s bringing us together, and she’s still the one holding space for us to reconnect”

Guests of Métis Crossing canoeing on the North Saskatchewan River

Métis Nation because if it wasn’t for those rivers and those waterways, our European grandfathers would never have met our First Nations grandmothers,” says LaRose. “The river is still the one that’s bringing us together, and she’s still the one that’s holding space for us to reconnect, learn from one another and share our stories. She’s got lots of gifts to give us.”

The gift that autumn afternoon — on what’s now a Canadian Heritage River — is insight into how the Métis helped shape Canada.

I had made the drive northeast from Edmonton to see why Métis Crossing is Alberta’s premier destination for Métis culture, history and adventure. Owned by the Métis Nation of Alberta, it sits on 278 hectares of historical land within Victoria District National Historic Site.

A trading spot for First Nations people for 8,000 years, this land evolved into river lots homesteaded by the original Métis settlers from Red River, Man., in the 1860s. Long, narrow strips of land ran perpendicular to rivers so farmers had water access and wooded lots.

Métis Crossing now uses the land as a way to share the story of the Métis people — past, present and future — through cultural experiences.

"We are children of the fur trade," says Métis Crossing CEO Juanita Marois. "We do not claim to be here from time immemorial, like our First Nations ancestors do, but we claim to be a nation of people on this land before Canada was a nation."

Canada recognizes the Métis, First Nations and Inuit as distinct Indigenous Peoples. While 550,000 people self-identify as Métis, some are simply of mixed ancestry and can't prove they descended from voyageurs. The Métis Nation of Alberta has 54,000 registered citizens.

Métis Crossing showcases a Red River cart in its cultural heritage gathering centre. "It was really cool technology for the time," says Marois, "the first amphibious vehicle." Made of wood with removable wheels and no metal parts, the carts could float across rivers.

Next to the centre is a boutique lodge designed by a Métis architect that hints at fur trade-era river-lot homes and features Métis quilts. Sky-watching domes let people take in the aurora borealis and constellations while learning how the Métis used the sky as a clock, calendar and navigation tool. A restaurant serves Indigenous-inspired meals, such as Saskatoon-berry lemonade, wild rice soup, bison burgers and a Métis Grub Sandwich featuring fried bologna on bannock. "We try to engage your head, your heart, your hands and your hunger," explains Marois.

Daily seasonal experiences reflect Métis life on the land. That might mean snowshoeing to a trapline, taking archery lessons to understand hunting, hearing about the forest's bounty, learning beadwork or doing the "Paddle into the Past" canoe journey.

"This was never meant to be a museum where you looked at old things behind glass and you read plaques," says Marois. "This is all about coming to experience Métis culture — to interact with people, to get onto the water to have a paddle into the past, to interact with these amazing bison."

Bison are called *bufloo* in Michif, the Métis language. They once roamed these hills when the Métis people gathered for seasonal hunts. Now they're back in a 130-hectare wildlife park created with Ukrainian-Canadian rancher Len Hrehorets.

When I have a return visit in winter, I take Métis Crossing's signature wildlife tour. Knowledge Holder Lilyrose Meyers drives me through five paddocks to see plains and wood bison, elk and Percheron horses.

Meyers greets the animals like relatives and conveys her love of the land. "It recharges you," she says. "Métis Crossing is a place of learning. It's for all of us." CH

Bison like these once roamed the nearby hills when the Métis people gathered for seasonal hunts

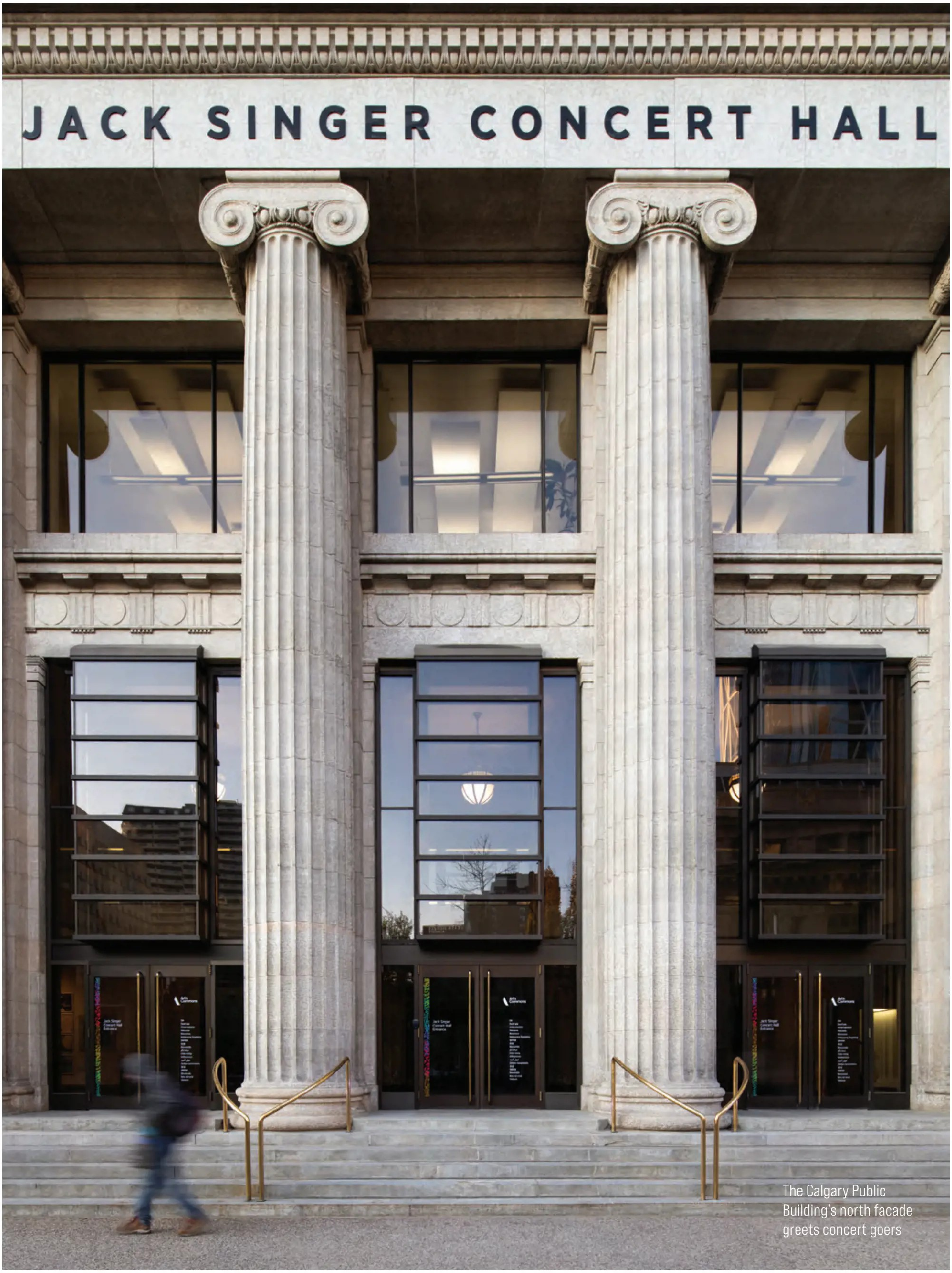
INDIGENOUS TOURISM ALBERTA_ROAM CREATIVE

IF YOU GO

GETTING THERE: Métis Crossing is 90 minutes northeast of Edmonton and 10 minutes south of Smoky Lake. It's open year-round for day trips and overnight stays at three price points — camping, a boutique lodge and luxury sky-watching domes.

EAT AND DRINK: Métis Crossing serves Indigenous-inspired cuisine at its Bistro at the Lodge. Try bannock with seasonal jam, wild rice soup and bison burgers.

EXPLORE: Take the route from Edmonton that passes by Elk Island National Park, Canada's first wildlife refuge and only fully enclosed national park. Founded in 1906 as an elk preserve, the park is now known for its conservation herd of 400 plains bison and 300 wood bison.


JACK SINGER CONCERT HALL

The Calgary Public Building's north facade greets concert goers

LEMAY – PHOTOGRAPH: ADRIEN WILLIAMS

Structured for Success

Renovations to the Calgary Public Building combined heritage, sustainability and relevance

By Aadya Arora

Recent repairs to its exterior have breathed new life into the Calgary Public Building, showcasing its ornamental colonial-style beaux-arts design mixed with bold Chicago commercial-style architecture on the higher floors. The restoration earned it a Resource Conservation Award from Heritage Calgary in 2024, but the building has a long history of redefining heritage conservation.

Situated at the east end of historic Stephen Avenue, the Calgary Public Building was constructed primarily as a replacement for the city's main post office, which shut down in 1894. The building's plan was ready by 1919, but construction delays and a lack of funding meant that the actual construction didn't take place until 1929, with completion in 1931. The eight-storey U-shaped federal structure then housed not only the post office but also offices of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Veterans Affairs and Armed Forces, among others.

As the years went by, the offices changed hands and such federal agencies as the National Film Board, the Forest Canada Department, the Income Tax Department and Indian Affairs set up workplaces there.

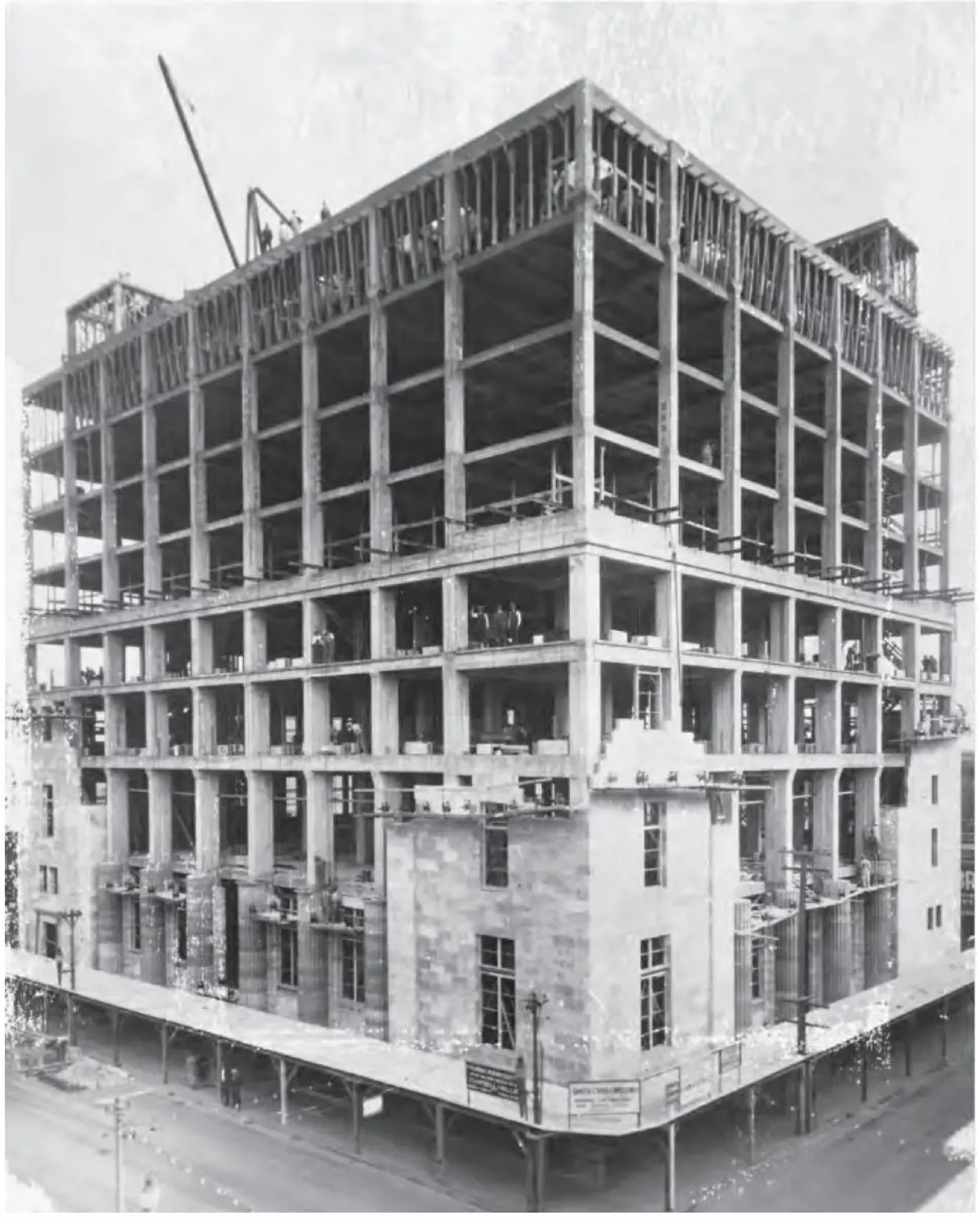
The building was passed to the municipal government in 1982, when the south facade was converted into the lobby for the Jack Singer Concert Hall as part of a newly conceived multi-venue performing arts facility called the Arts Commons. The top three floors, however, continued to function as municipal office spaces — as they do to this day.

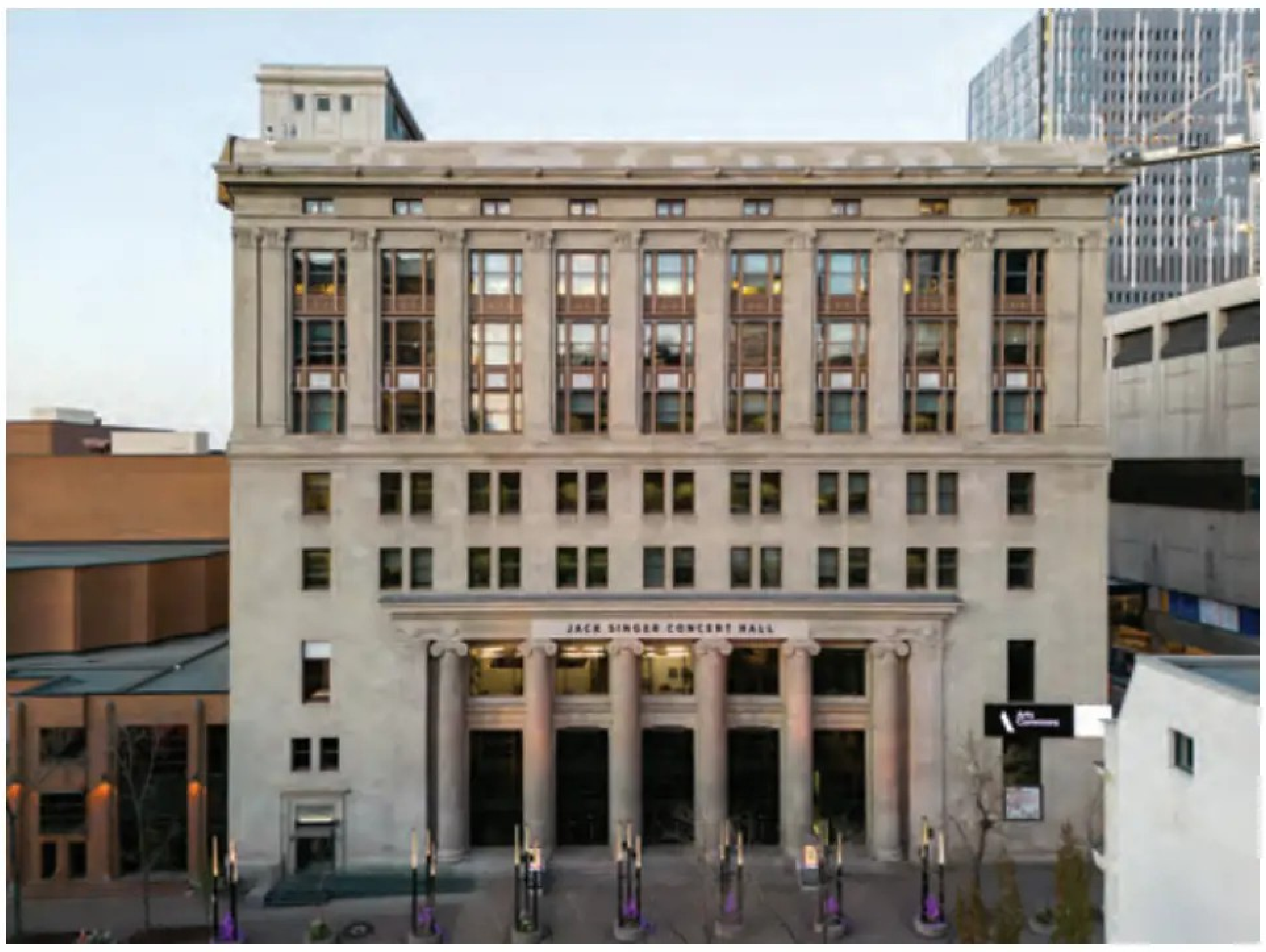
Repurposing the building's first three floors to become part of a performing arts centre brings more traffic now than ever before. Cynthia Klassen, heritage resources program manager at Heritage Calgary, says that with office spaces increasingly being converted into residential areas in downtown Calgary, the arts-and-culture hub will see sustained use into the future.

Ensuring that sustainability required a significant interior renovation and mechanical upgrade in 2011 to make the building more comfortable and energy efficient.

The big Chicago-style windows, long shut, were made operable again for ventilation and natural light along with installation of some new windows. The exterior's Tyndall limestone cladding has a high thermal mass — key in improving the building's cooling — which helped in replacing the interior radiators, previously its sole mechanical source of heat. In another green initiative, the building was one of the first in Western Canada to use chilled beams, which employ water rather than air for cooling. This is not only quiet but it also eliminates the need for excessive air flow from mechanical fans. Additionally, it ups the energy efficiency. New infrastructure for possible rainwater harvesting was installed and can be connected to the local district heating utility to provide hot water.

A new high-performance liner was installed between the building's exterior and interior, boosting insulation





Top: Construction of the Calgary Public Building was delayed until 1929 and completed in 1931

Above: The full north facade of the Calgary Public Building, as it looks today

TOP: UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY ARCHIVES. BOTTOM: LEMAY – PHOTOGRAPH: ADRIEN WILLIAMS

without affecting the historic outer walls. Solar power heats water during the summer, further cutting energy costs. These changes resulted in a 50 per cent reduction in energy consumption; it also earned the building the LEED Platinum certification for its sustainability efforts — a first for the City of Calgary.

Sustainable heritage

With the building's inside updated, attention turned in 2020 to the building's damaged exterior — specifically, its use of Tyndall stone, which comes from Manitoba and, in 2023, was designated a Global Heritage Stone by UNESCO. The limestone's highly fossiliferous nature gives it its signature look but makes it prone to cracks. Christopher Zahaluk, project director for the 2020 renovation, explains that the exterior cracks had to be repaired wherever possible before replacement would be considered.

> **Wherever possible, the original finishes and fixtures were maintained or similar ones installed**

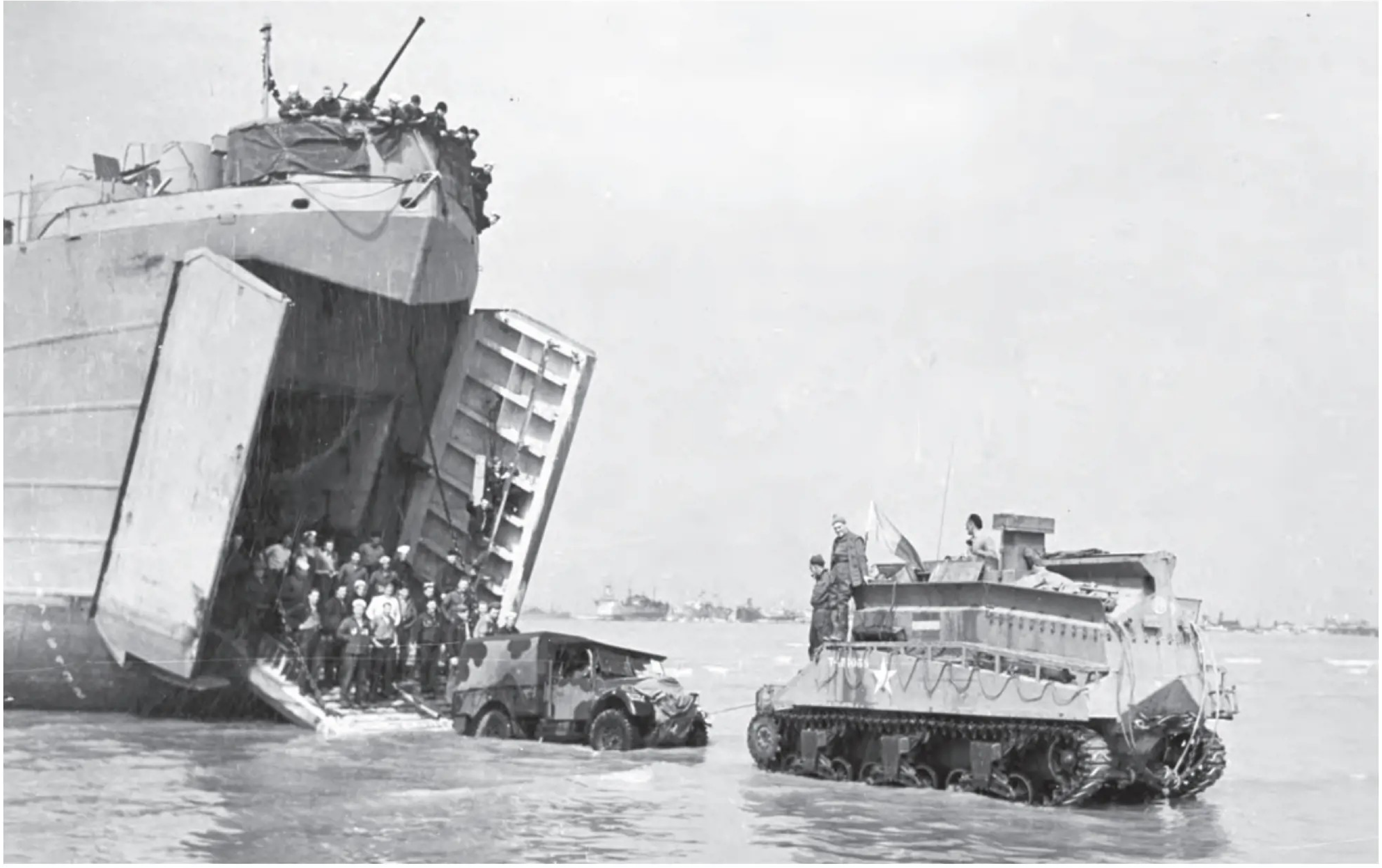
"Within heritage buildings, there's an inherent amount of energy and embodied carbon that goes into these materials that are produced — extracting them from the resources, processing them and putting them in place," says Zahaluk. "So maintaining them in place and prolonging their life is the natural step for sustainability." Many stones at the parapet were replaced, some of the carved lion heads at the parapets had to be updated and the capitals of the signature ionic columns were pinned back.

Because keeping the historic appearance was still top priority, wherever possible, the original finishes and fixtures were maintained or similar ones installed. The sixth level was designated as the "heritage floor," where the doors, marble baseboards and washrooms remained reminiscent of the original 1931 construction. Even the lavatories have marble stall dividers and wooden doors like they used to.

The first floor, which now serves as the lobby for the Jack Singer Concert Hall, has kept its two-storey height, coffered ceilings, classical-motif plasterwork, hanging bronze light fixtures and black-and-white Quebec marble flooring, among other features. The two manually operated elevators were automated only a few years ago for better functioning while preserving their original design.

"Sustainability and heritage conservation efforts can seem at odds," says Zahaluk, "but if you take a moment to [see] how they can work together and contribute, they're a lot more intertwined and supportive of each other."

Though the grand architecture evokes a bygone era, the Calgary Public Building's story continues to evolve. **CH**



Recovering a D-Day vehicle

The Canadian War Museum has acquired an integral piece of Canada's D-Day story: an M4A2 Sherman beach armoured recovery vehicle (BARV).

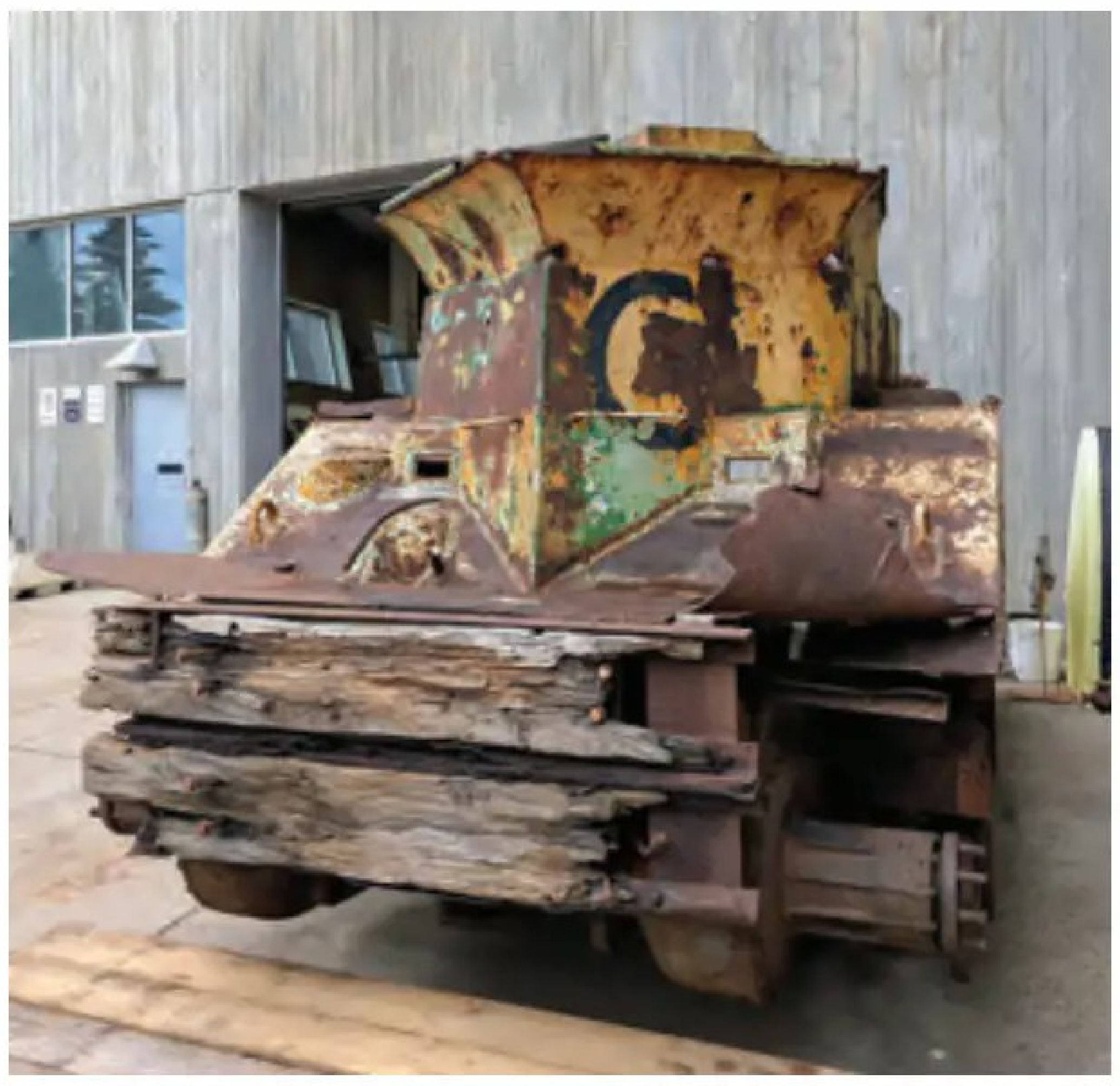
Donated by The Tank Museum in the United Kingdom, the BARV hull is one of only five such vehicles known to exist and will become the sole Sherman BARV on display in North America.

"The War Museum is one of the only institutions in Canada with the expertise to fully restore these types of complex military vehicles," says James Whitham, the museum's director general. "We're excited to be able to bring this into our collection and begin the painstaking restoration of this rare vehicle, which will help us tell the story of Canada's involvement in the Normandy landings and subsequent beach operations."

BARVs were vital to Canadian and Allied success on June 6, 1944, during the D-Day landings at Juno Beach and elsewhere. They could operate in water up to three metres deep and helped move vehicles blocking the beaches that had either broken down or been damaged by enemy fire.

Sherman BARVs were also used during the Rhine River crossing in March 1945 and remained in British military service until 1963. The precise involvement of this particular BARV on D-Day is still being researched.

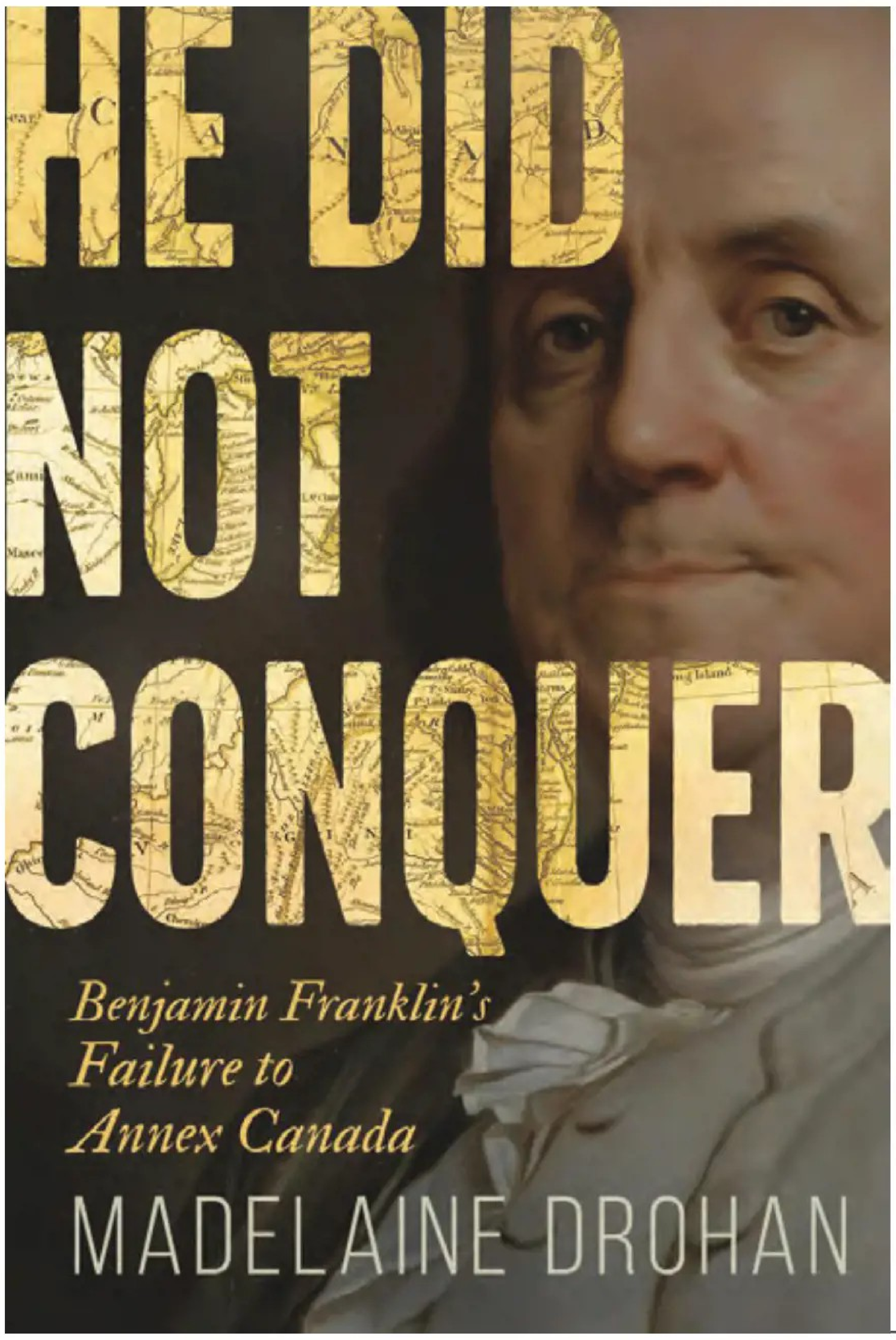
The vehicle was originally recovered from a firing range on Salisbury Plain in southern England and has been preserved at The Tank Museum since 2009. Due to the extent of restoration required, it will be several years before the BARV is ready for public display. — CH *staff*



Top: The M4A2 Sherman beach armoured recovery vehicle (BARV) helped move vehicles blocking beaches

Above: This BARV needs careful restoration before it can be put on display

TOP: COURTESY OF THE TANK MUSEUM. BOTTOM: COURTESY OF THE CANADIAN WAR MUSEUM



He Did Not Conquer:

Benjamin Franklin's Failure to Annex Canada

by Madelaine Drohan

When U.S. President Donald Trump mused about making Canada the 51st state, he may have been channelling Benjamin Franklin, a respected leader of the American Revolution. After all, it was Franklin who proposed annexing Canada back in the mid-1700s, when he represented the Thirteen Colonies in London. Many American politicians have done so since, as journalist Madelaine Drohan (the author of "Friend or Foe?" in the June-July 2025 issue of *Canada's History* on American annexation threats) reveals in this timely look at "the anticipated conquest of Canada."

Drohan calls Franklin "the eighteenth-century equivalent of a rock star" and guides us through the postmaster-politician's accomplishments as an inventor (including the lightning rod), statesman, diplomat, polemicist, satirist and military strategist. She also warns that though his dream of forcing Canada to join the American colonies was a "prize that eluded him," it remains a desire of others.

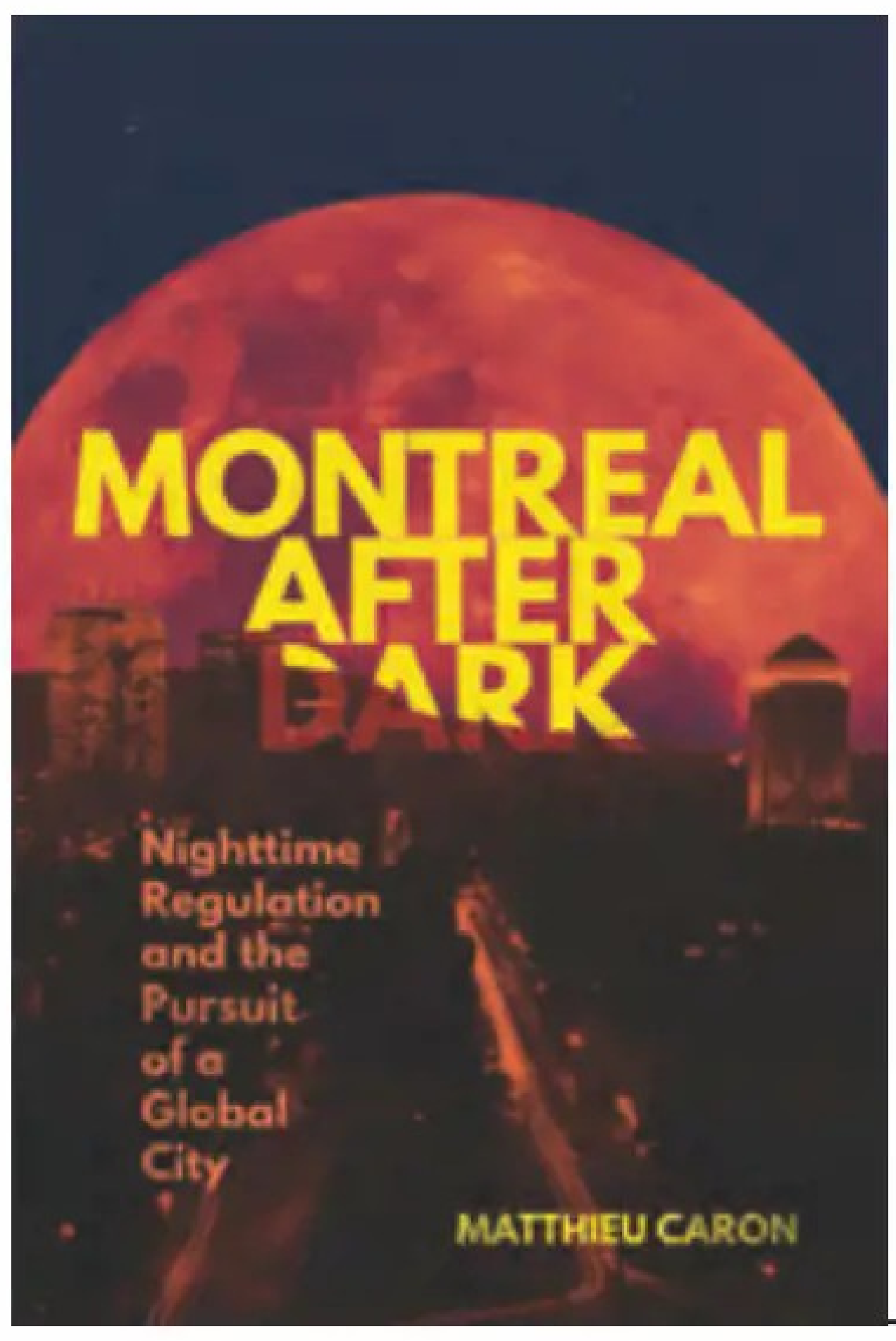
In tracking Franklin's "failure" to conquer, Drohan offers "not a biography" but a detailed sketch of Franklin's influential life in London, Paris and at home in Philadelphia, replete with rumoured affairs. He also dabbled in fake news by creating a hoax in 1773, falsely claiming that Britain was "a colony of Prussia."

Drohan additionally covers much related history, including the details of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, which ended the Seven Years' War, and the Quebec Act of 1774, establishing the boundaries of French Canada. When she exposes the gout-ridden Franklin's planned conquest, we get hints of what we may need to know to coexist with "an increasingly unstable neighbour."

The 1775 attempt to take Canada militarily, under the leadership of rebel generals Richard Montgomery and Benedict Arnold, ended as badly as the War of 1812. Despite those losses, the allure of manifest destiny continues to attract ambitious Americans. With Canadians rising up in defence of their country today, Trump's quest has as much likelihood of success as Franklin's did. It seems this "powerful and prominent man" and sometime hoaxer should have stuck to his lightning rods.

Dundurn Press, 296 pages, $27.99

Reviewed by writer and historian **Ron Verzuh**



Montreal After Dark:

Nighttime Regulation and the Pursuit of a Global City

by Matthieu Caron

On Oct. 7, 1969, during Montreal's Night of Terror (a.k.a. the Murray Hill riot) precipitated by a police strike, rioters destroyed the interior of Mayor Jean Drapeau's Le Vaisseau d'Or restaurant. The bust of its namesake, the doomed French-Canadian poet Émile Nelligan, emerged unscathed — a fitting example of the resilience of the city's creative spirits.

In *Montreal After Dark*, historian Matthieu Caron traces how postwar Montreal sought to reinvent itself from this kind of nightlife capital to a sanitized "global city." The author opens with 1940s Montreal at its peak, a hub where sex, jazz, gambling and whisky fuelled one of North America's hottest after-dark scenes, mixing artists, entrepreneurs and marginalized communities with organized crime and vice.

The book's central figure is Mayor Drapeau, whose nearly three decades in office redefined Montreal's image. Determined to make the city internationally respectable and pave the way for Expo 67 and the 1976 Olympics, Drapeau cracked down on nightlife while aligning with a provincial government hostile to labour unions and dissent.

Where Caron's book stands out from earlier works about Montreal (such as William Weintraub's *City Unique*) is its focus on the marginalized: Drapeau's "morality squad" targeted the very communities that had sustained the city's after-hours economy — sex workers, musicians, taxi drivers and queer and racialized populations.

Drapeau's Civic Party sought not just to regulate bars and brothels but also to police bodies — particularly women's sexuality, using anti-sex work laws to "beautify" the city. Everything from pornography (Drapeau ordered the seizure of the Swedish film *I, a Woman*) to pinball machines fell under scrutiny, as municipal policy turned nightlife into a checklist of prohibitions, all of which unfolded against the backdrop of the Quiet Revolution, the sovereignty movement and the October Crisis.

Written with scholarly rigour and sympathetic to those most harmed, Caron's book is a sharp, engaging account of how controlling the night became key to controlling the city.

McGill-Queen's University Press, 342 pages, $34.95

Reviewed by **Eric Veillette**, a Toronto-based journalist and researcher-in-residence at CineMobilia at York University

ImagiNation
The Golden Age of Toronto Kids' TV
Ed Conroy

ImagiNation:

The Golden Age of Toronto Kids' TV

by Ed Conroy

The Friendly Giant. Mr. Dressup. Polka Dot Door. Degrassi in all of its forms. For decades, viewers were entranced by the high quality of children's programming produced in Toronto by CTV, CBC, TVOntario, YTV and other networks. Working on tight budgets, these series educated and entertained, and found loyal audiences across Canada, the United States and beyond.

For more than two decades, children's shows have been a cornerstone of Ed Conroy's Retrontario television preservation project. His YouTube channel features uploads of many fondly remembered TV favourites that aren't widely available because of rights issues.

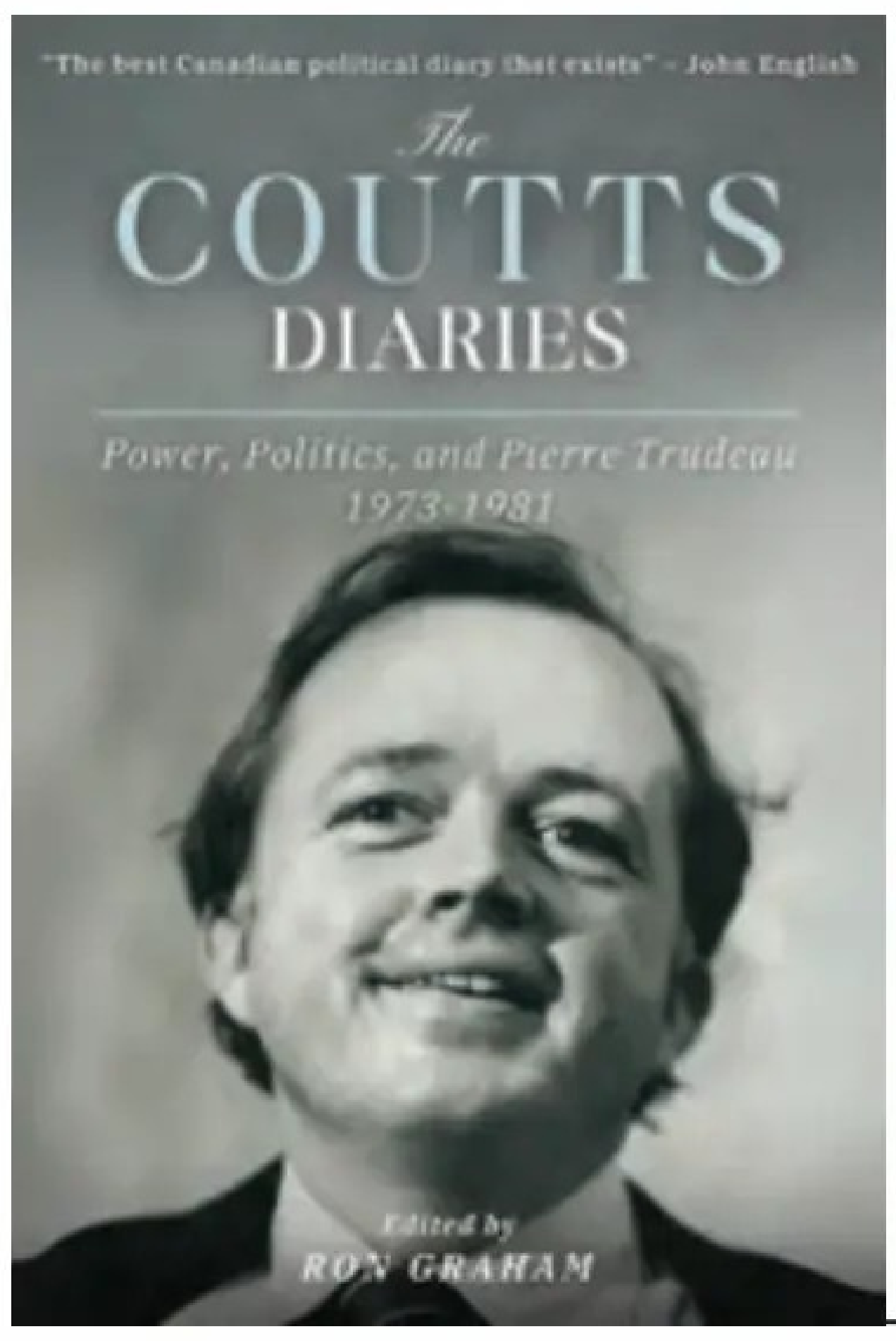
In his first book, *ImagiNation*, Conroy spotlights Toronto-produced programming aired between the launch of CBC's television service in 1952 and 2000, when the rise of the internet began fragmenting viewing habits. Beyond a nostalgic look at these series, Conroy explores the behind-the-scenes stories of creators battling network executives, educators and artists working in harmony, and changing trends in programming and technology. The chronological structure allows anyone from baby boomers to millennials to jump in at whatever point matches their kid-show viewing days (or interests). Helpful sidebars include tales of the children's TV world across the border in Buffalo, N.Y., and such famous 1990s public service announcements as "Don't Put It in Your Mouth."

There are plenty of interesting tidbits throughout, from the Canadian career of Fred Rogers (who hosted a prototype of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* in the early 1960s) to *Kiddo the Clown*, a CTV series whose title character's apartment was destroyed in the final episode to make way for Toronto's subway system. Conroy also explores an interesting theory that connects the CBC version of *Howdy Doody* and the long-running British sci-fi series *Doctor Who*.

As to why these children's programs resonated with viewers, Conroy quotes Sharon Hampson of Sharon, Lois & Bram, who felt tiny budgets "forced the shows to be more real."

Dundurn Press, 352 pages, $32

Reviewed by **Jamie Bradburn**, a Toronto-based writer and public historian


"The best Canadian political diary that exists" – John English
The COUTTS DIARIES
Power, Politics, and Pierre Trudeau 1973-1981
Edited by RON GRAHAM

The Coutts Diaries:

Power, Politics, and Pierre Trudeau 1973-1981

edited by Ron Graham

Canadian historians and readers of a certain age will gobble up this backroom narrative of wheeling, dealing and politicking on Parliament Hill during eight years (and four elections) of Canada's first Trudeau era.

Jim Coutts, born in rural Alberta in 1938, was principal secretary to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau from 1975 to 1981. In that role he guided the Liberal Party and its cabinet through turbulent issues that included the reviled National Energy Program, stratospheric inflation and interest rates, (12 per cent and 19 per cent respectively), constitutional wrangling, a Quebec sovereignty referendum, the rise and quick fall of Progressive Conservative Party leader Joe Clark, and the collapse of the PM's marriage to Margaret Trudeau.

Graham has edited the diaries into a record of secret machinations

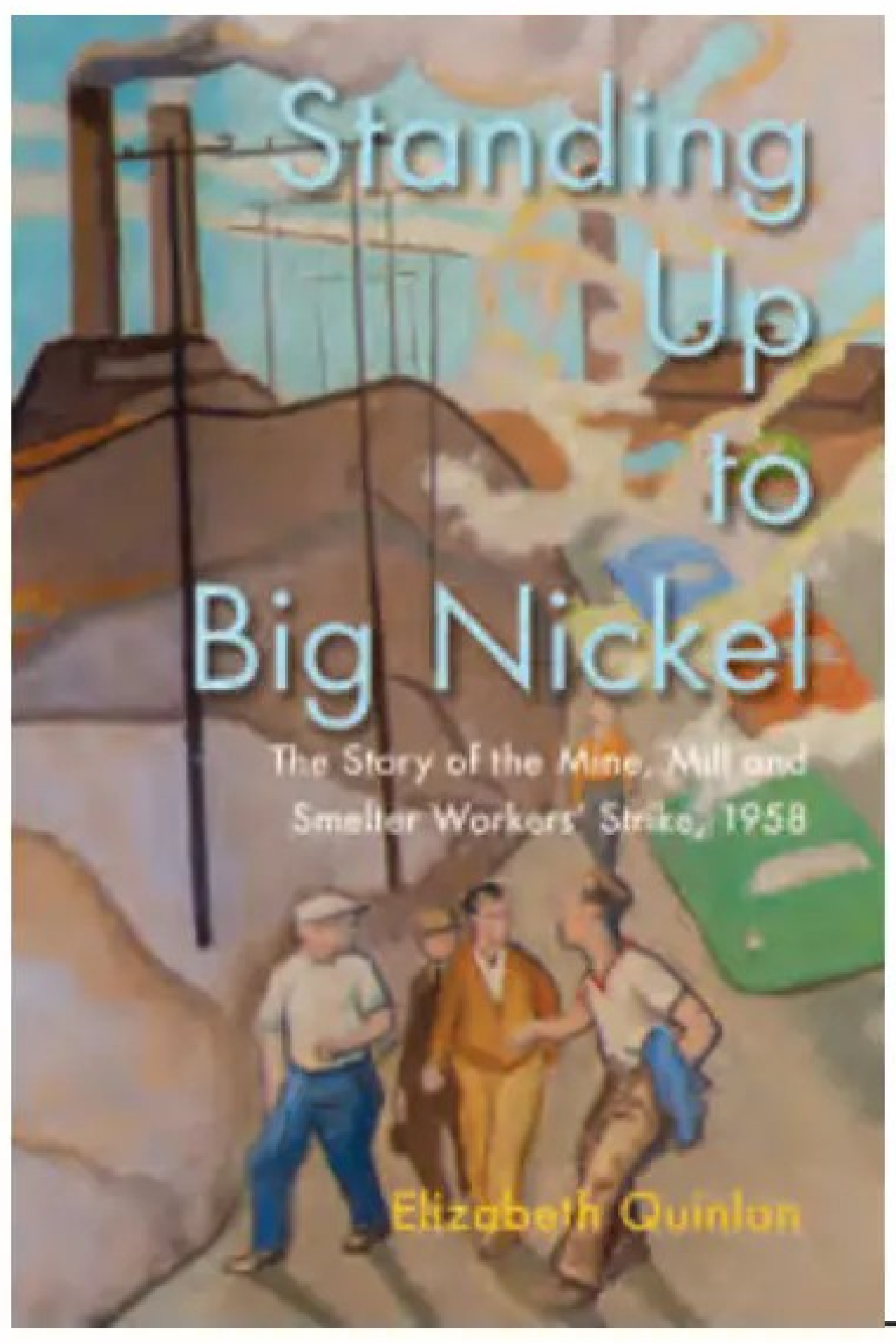
Political journalist Ron Graham, renowned for his memoirs of Jean Chrétien and Pierre Trudeau, has edited 14 of Coutts's diaries into a useful and insightful record of the secret machinations that drove the Trudeau-era Liberals' priorities, planning and policies — all of which still resonate across the country. (Coutts's archives at the University of Toronto were only opened to researchers in 2025, a dozen years after his death, but Graham was given early access.)

Along with insights into the whimsical nature of his procrastinating boss, Coutts writes of all-night poker games (with $12,000 wins and losses), Toronto lunches with business and political heavyweights, and personal ostracization in his native — and very conservative — Alberta.

The one piece missing from this fascinating book is a biographical glossary for readers unfamiliar with such important political surnames as Axworthy, Marchand, MacEachen, Sharp, Whelan and Turner, to name only a few.

Sutherland House, 479 pages, $50

Reviewed by **Frank B. Edwards**, who launched his journalism career during the '70s


Standing Up to Big Nickel
The Story of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Strike, 1958
Elizabeth Quinlan

Standing Up to Big Nickel:

The Story of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers' Strike, 1958

by Elizabeth Quinlan

When 14,000 striking workers at the Inco nickel mine and smelter in Sudbury, Ont., put down their tools on Sept. 24, 1958, they unexpectedly ushered in a new era in Canadian labour history. In *Standing Up to Big Nickel*, author Elizabeth Quinlan demonstrates how this strike marked a shift from traditional working-class struggle to the more cautious approach taken by unions bound by new and restrictive postwar legislation. The latter, says Quinlan, helps explain the declining power of organized labour in recent decades.

Quinlan, a sociology professor whose father was a union staff member at the time of the strike, is well positioned to describe the multicultural working-class culture of this northern Ontario city in the 1950s. Job conditions were horrific. Nasty foremen abused employees unchecked. Families struggled to grow gardens in an environment poisoned by sulphuric acid pollution. Workers, many of them recent immigrants, had little natural kinship with one another. All of this played out against the backdrop of the Cold War and the Red Scare, in which unions were suspected of being agents of Stalinism.

The International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers — shunned by the Canadian Labour Congress for its socialist ideology — was unapologetic about its roots. It focused on establishing a strong working-class culture through improved wages and benefits, but also through cultural associations, such as union-sponsored dance classes and summer camps for families. Quinlan quotes many who recall the 1950s as a golden era of community cohesion in Sudbury.

When the company, sitting on a surplus of nickel and supported by government, refused to seriously negotiate, a strike was all but inevitable. Unfortunately, three months of hardship led to a paltry settlement, cracks in union solidarity and the demise of the mine, mill and smelter workers' union.

Standing Up to Big Nickel brings to life a key moment in labour history and reminds us that workers' struggles are far from over.

McGill-Queen's University Press, 228 pages, $34.95

Reviewed by **Nelle Oosterom**, a frequent contributor to *Canada's History*

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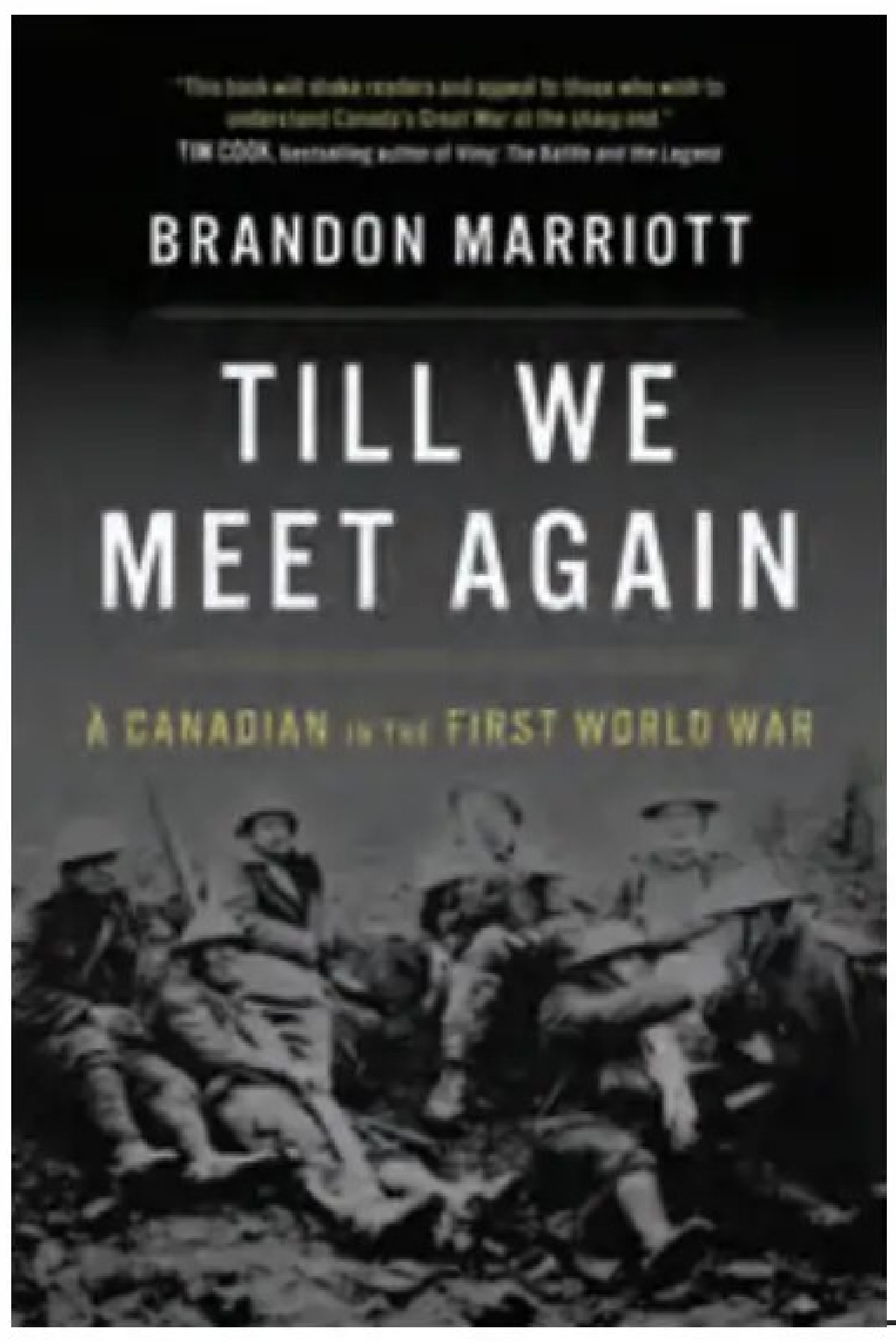


Till We Meet Again:

A Canadian in the First World War

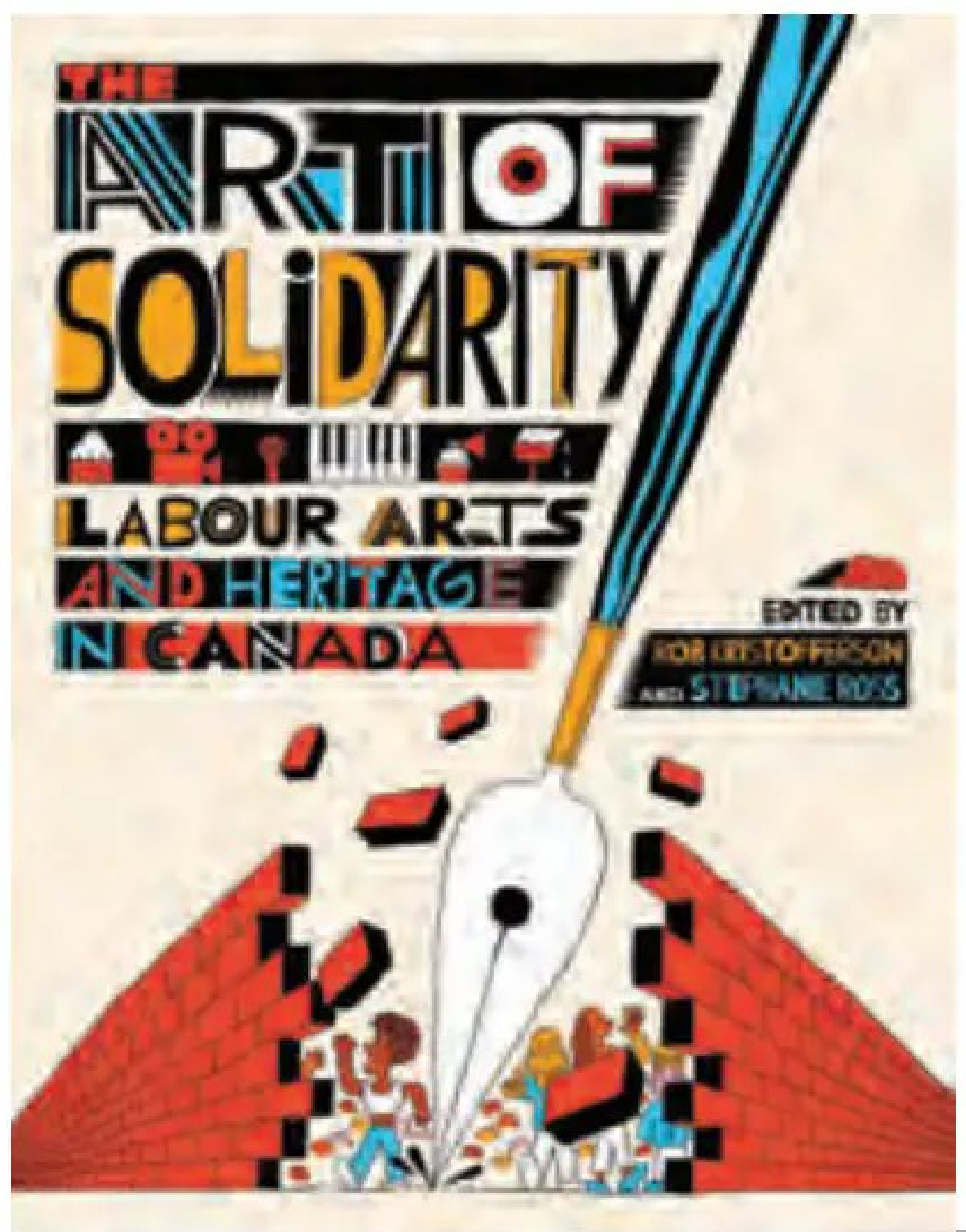
by Brandon Marriott

Pte. George Price of the 28th Battalion was the last British Empire soldier killed in the First World War, shot mere minutes before it ended. Price is just one of the people we meet fighting on the Western Front during author Brandon Marriott's recreation of the story of Price's fellow battalion member Sgt. Lester Harper in *Till We Meet Again*. It's a nuanced journey from hopeful enlistee to disillusioned sergeant.

To achieve this, Marriott, a historian and a research associate at Simon Fraser University, used information from letters Harper sent to his wife, Mabel, back home in Pouce Coupe, B.C., interviews with family members, as well as detailed historical research from archives and texts. The result is a deeply human look at a world that's often romanticized.

Simon & Schuster Canada, 320 pages, $39.99

Reviewed by ***CH* staff**


THE ART OF SOLIDARITY
LABOUR ARTS AND HERITAGE IN CANADA
EDITED BY ROB KRISTOFFERSON AND STEPHANIE ROSS

The Art of Solidarity:

Labour Arts and Heritage in Canada

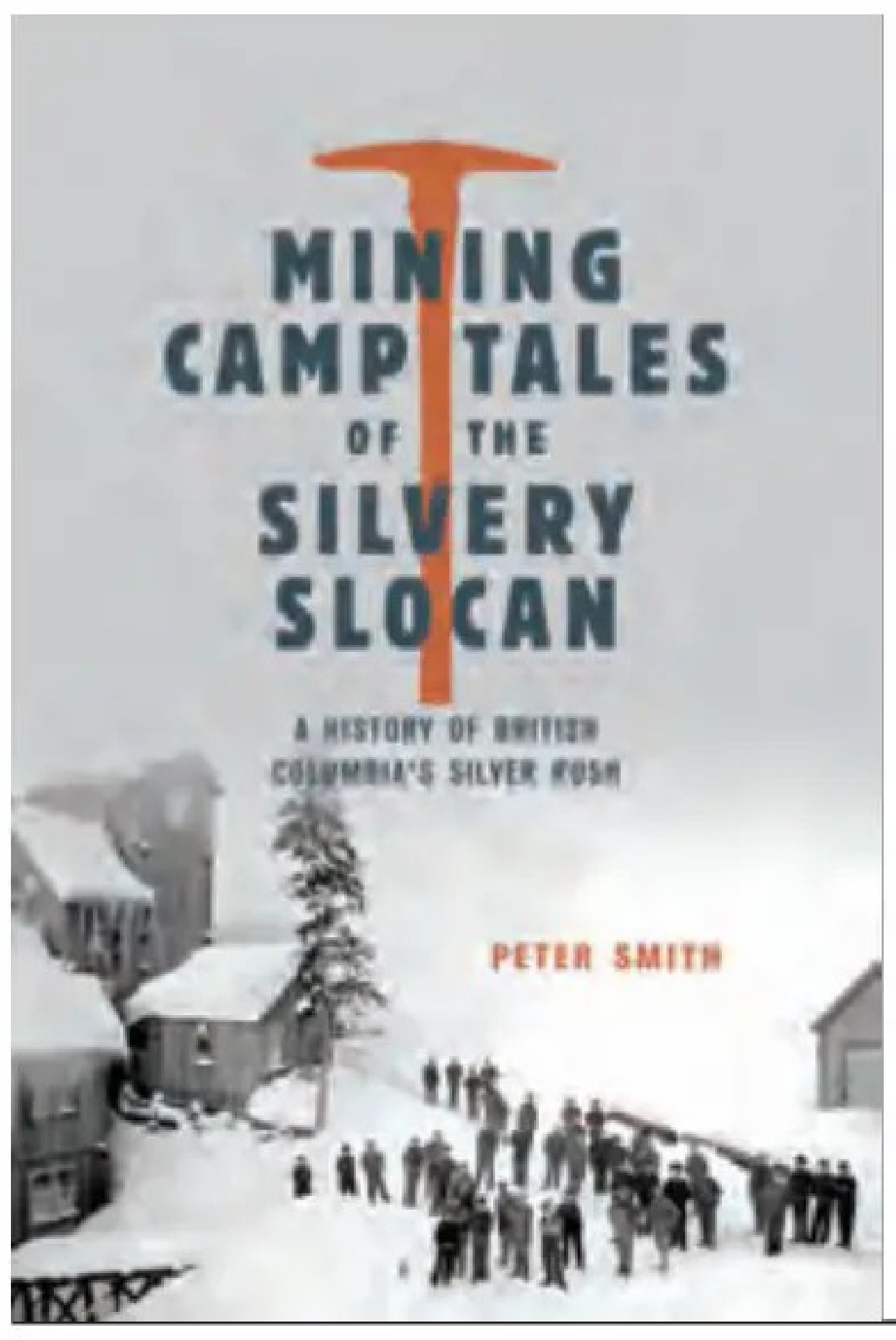
edited by Rob Kristofferson and Stephanie Ross

In June 2023, the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre in Hamilton held a national conference for people in the labour arts and labour heritage fields. It was an opportunity for artists, activists and academics from across Canada to exchange ideas and foster collaboration to strengthen their national network. The thoughts shared there are the basis for *The Art of Solidarity*.

The editors include recent histories of several regional labour arts and heritage organizations, as well as profiles of artists and groups working in that space. The final chapters are devoted to visions of its future. Interspersed throughout are examples of the art — think posters, installations and images of performances — that nourish and build these movements. What they've produced with this book is an optimistic and compelling compilation that reinforces the power of public art combined with public history.

Between the Lines, 208 pages, $39.95

Reviewed by **Andrew Workman**, a graphic designer at *Canada's History*


MINING CAMP TALES OF THE SILVERY SLOCAN
A HISTORY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA'S SILVER RUSH
PETER SMITH

Mining Camp Tales of the Silvery Slocan:

A History of British Columbia's Silver Rush

by Peter Smith

In 1891, the quiet forests of B.C.'s Slocan Valley — a rugged strip of wilderness dominated by long, narrow Slocan Lake — were briefly disrupted by the arrival of thousands of silver-mad prospectors and get-rich-quick entrepreneurs. The mania lasted less than a decade and is commemorated today by a few ghost towns and the tiny settlements of New Denver, Silverton and Slocan Village.

> Smith provides a densely packed history of the region's boom towns

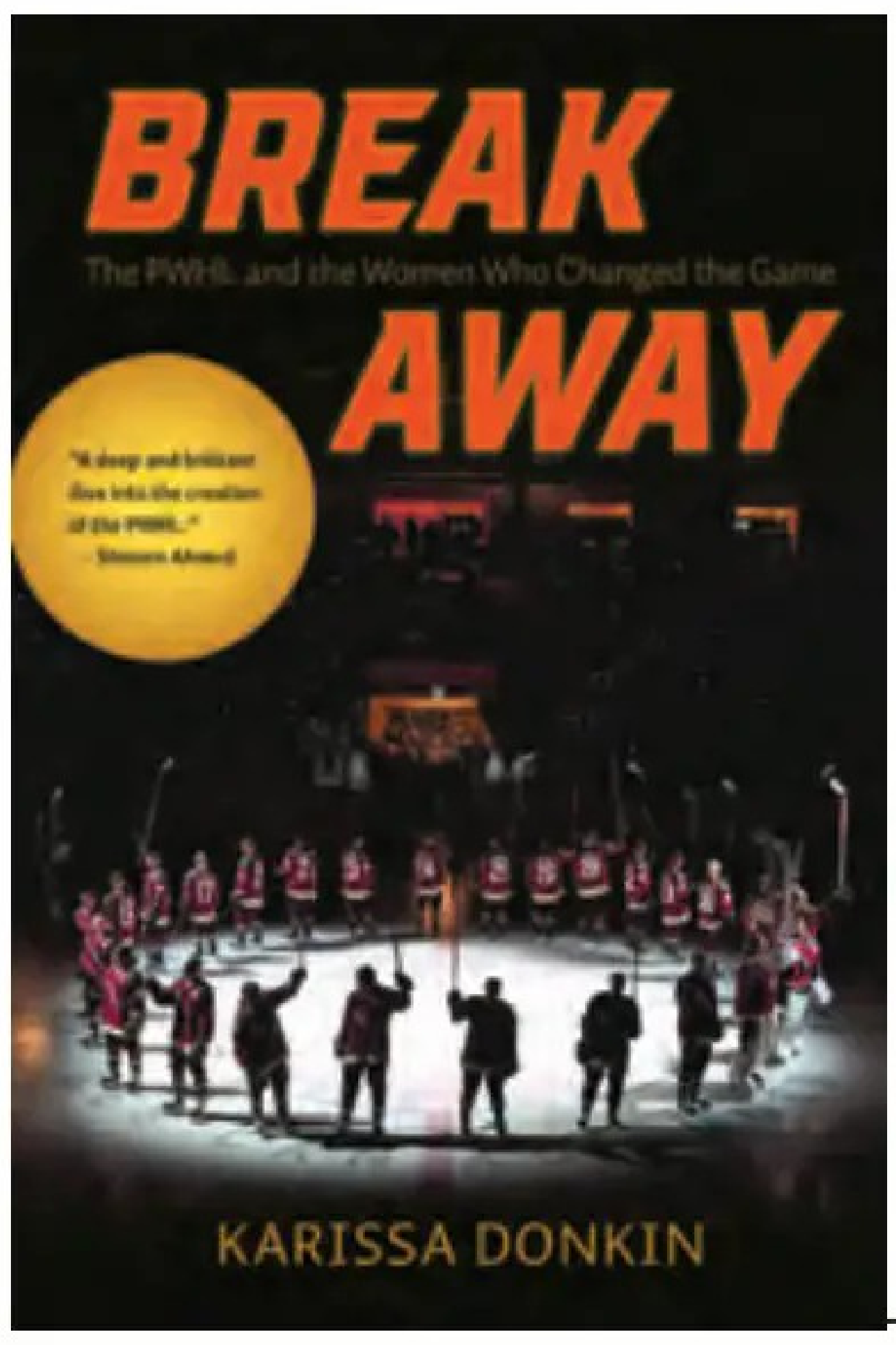
Author Peter Smith's record of one of Canada's few silver rushes provides a densely packed history of the boom towns that sprung up in the region — assiduously trying to include all the major and minor characters, hotels, churches and brothels that his herculean research uncovered. However, readers expecting colourful Robert Service- or Jack London-style tales will be disappointed, for the lives that Smith chronicles are most often told in paragraphs rather than pages. It's safe to assume that few of the newcomers stayed long enough to leave detailed evidence of their lives; the ones who stayed permanently tended to be mortal casualties of mishap or murder.

Nevertheless, this is a thorough catalogue of the dozen camps that grew into temporary towns, many with temporary populations of several thousand. When news of the first Slocan silver assays initially reached the city of Nelson, B.C., 100 kilometres away, a reporter noted that nearly its entire population of 5,000 rushed into the area.

Strangers to the Slocan Valley, located on the eastern edge of rugged Valhalla Provincial Park, are advised to have a good map close at hand since the book's single small hand-drawn effort offers no overall geographical perspective.

Heritage House, 380 pages, $34.95

Reviewed by **Frank B. Edwards**



Breakaway:

The PWHL and the Women Who Changed the Game

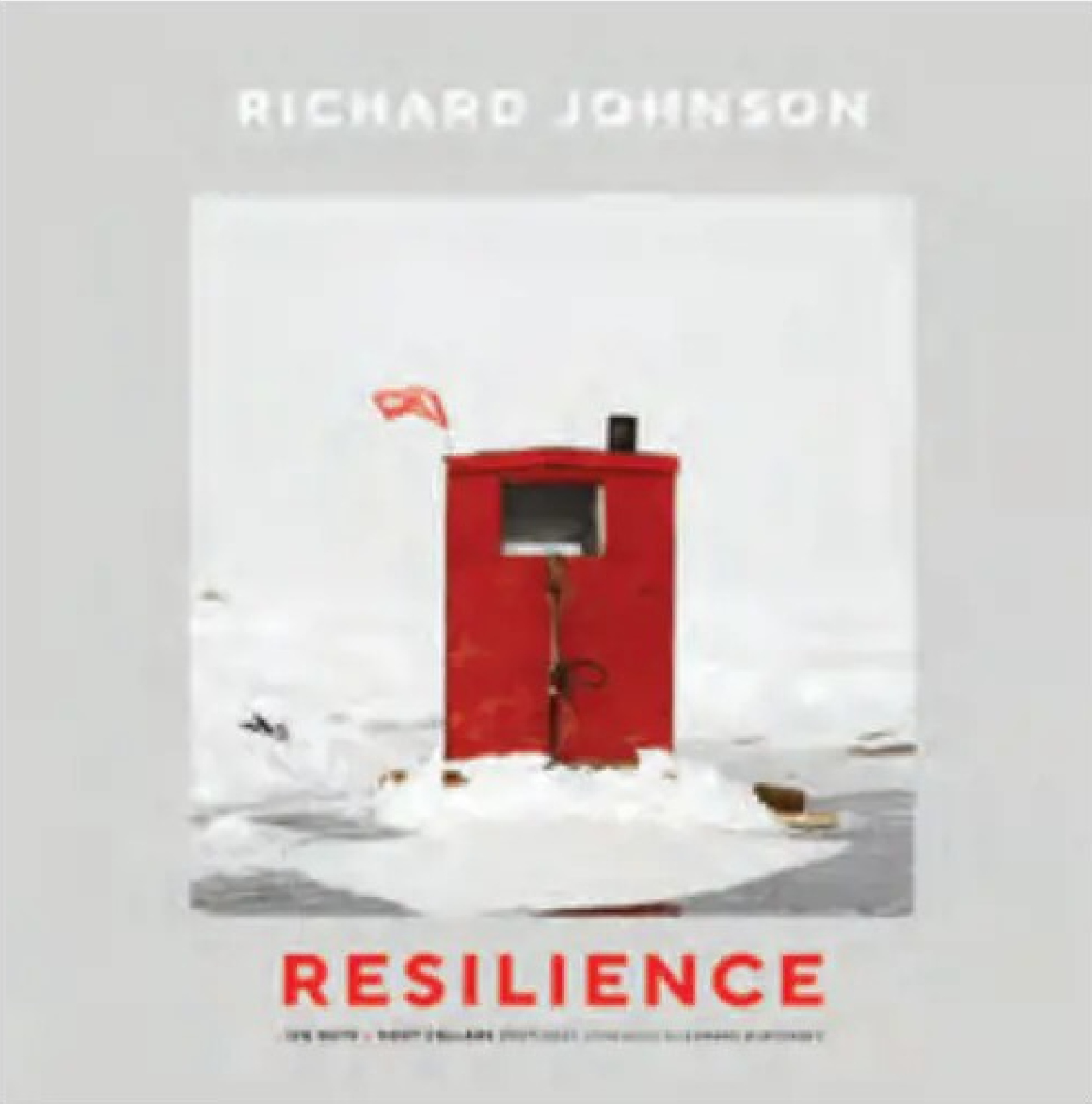
by Karissa Donkin

North American professional women's hockey got a massive boost on Jan. 1, 2024, when the Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) played its first game. After spending years on teams that paid very little — or paid nothing at all — women hockey players now had a good home.

Karissa Donkin's book on the league's creation provides a deeper understanding of what it means for current and future players. Donkin, a sports reporter, has crafted a readable story that will engage even casual hockey fans.

Goose Lane Editions, 248 pages, $26

Reviewed by ***CH* staff**



Richard Johnson:

Resilience—Ice Huts and Root Cellars (2007–2021)

by Lucie Bergeron-Johnson and Tom Smart

Toronto-based photographer Richard Johnson spent 14 years shooting a series of passion projects that led to wider recognition. These images are lovingly documented alongside essays curated for *Richard Johnson* by his wife, Lucie Bergeron-Johnson, and writer Tom Smart. Fellow photographer Edward Burtynsky wrote the foreword.

Johnson, who died in December 2021, shot such typically hand-built subjects as colourful ice huts across Canada, root cellars in Newfoundland and homemade garbage bins in Ontario. Though mostly people-free, his anthropological-style photography of items lets viewers learn something about the diversity of the humans who created and use them, and the country they're set in.

Figure 1 Publishing, 224 pages, $70

Reviewed by ***CH* staff**

Be sure to read our spring 2026 issue for reviews of these books.

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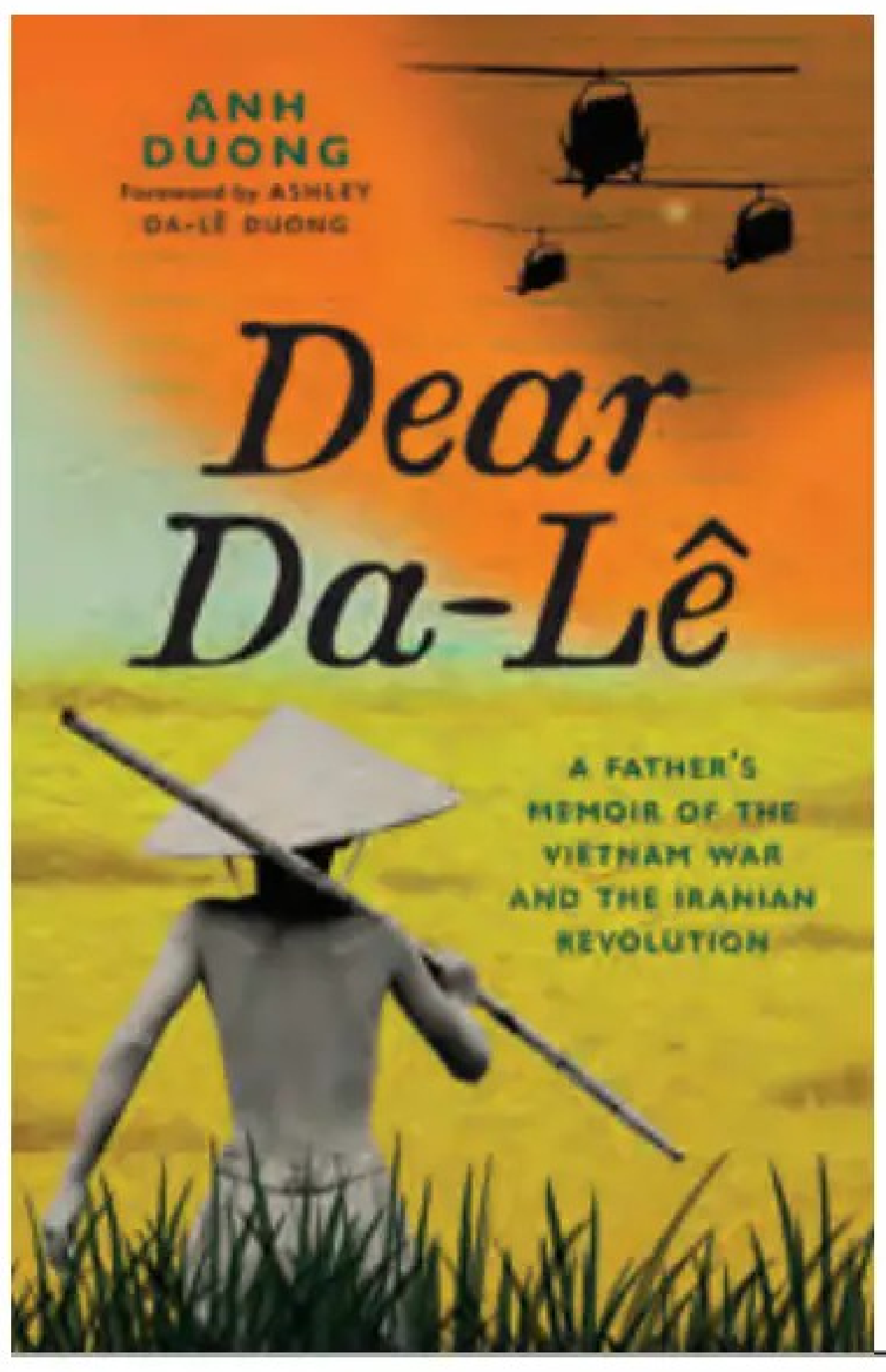


Dear Da-Lê:

A Father's Memoir of the Vietnam War and the Iranian Revolution

by Anh Duong

Born a few kilometres from Huế, Vietnam, in 1953, Anh Duong was three days old when French troops attacked his village and destroyed his home. Seventy-two years later, his face still bears a small scar from that day.

After a century of occupation, the French departed Vietnam the following year, but Duong's village of Da-Lê was not left in peace. Geopolitical fate placed it just south of the boundary between the newly created entities of North and South Vietnam, and the district became a killing ground for the next two decades.

Duong and his friends grew up in a world where everyone had to choose sides, even though there were no safe choices. Their lives were filled with informers, spies and violence. En route to school, children regularly passed gruesome evidence of overnight skirmishes: dead bodies left in view to show the consequences of conflicting loyalties. Local officials, neighbours and relatives routinely disappeared — sometimes arrested by soldiers of either side, but often to secretly join the Viet Cong guerillas or one of Vietnam's two opposing government armies. (Duong's father was drafted into the South Vietnamese army and was largely absent from his family for 20 years.)

At 14, Duong rode his bike through Viet Cong lines into Huế during the bloody Tet Offensive to visit his father's besieged army unit. On school nights, Viet Cong and American forces moved through his backyard in search of one another. Working in rice fields or scavenging for food on weekends, Duong occasionally attracted fire from American aircraft and unidentified snipers. One night at age 15, Duong was forced by the Viet Cong to haul rice and weapons along a jungle trail under threat of death yet returned in time to attend school the next day.

While most of Duong's peers gradually dropped out of school to join the fighting, he persisted with his studies, eventually moving 1,000 kilometres to the University of Saigon, where he struggled financially and academically. At age 21, he finally caught his first glimpse of a country at peace when he moved to Iran to study engineering just months before the South lost the Vietnam War. (Ironically, he graduated at the start of the Iranian Revolution and immigrated to Canada just as Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini took power.)

Years after the tumult back home ended, Duong, like many in North America's large Vietnamese diaspora, scrambled his way into middle-class success while hiding the trauma of Vietnam's war years from his family. He eventually broke his silence in 2015 in a heartfelt letter to his university-aged daughter, Ashley Da-Lê Duong, which tried to explain his "long-held wall of silence." His letter eventually grew into this austere but gripping memoir.

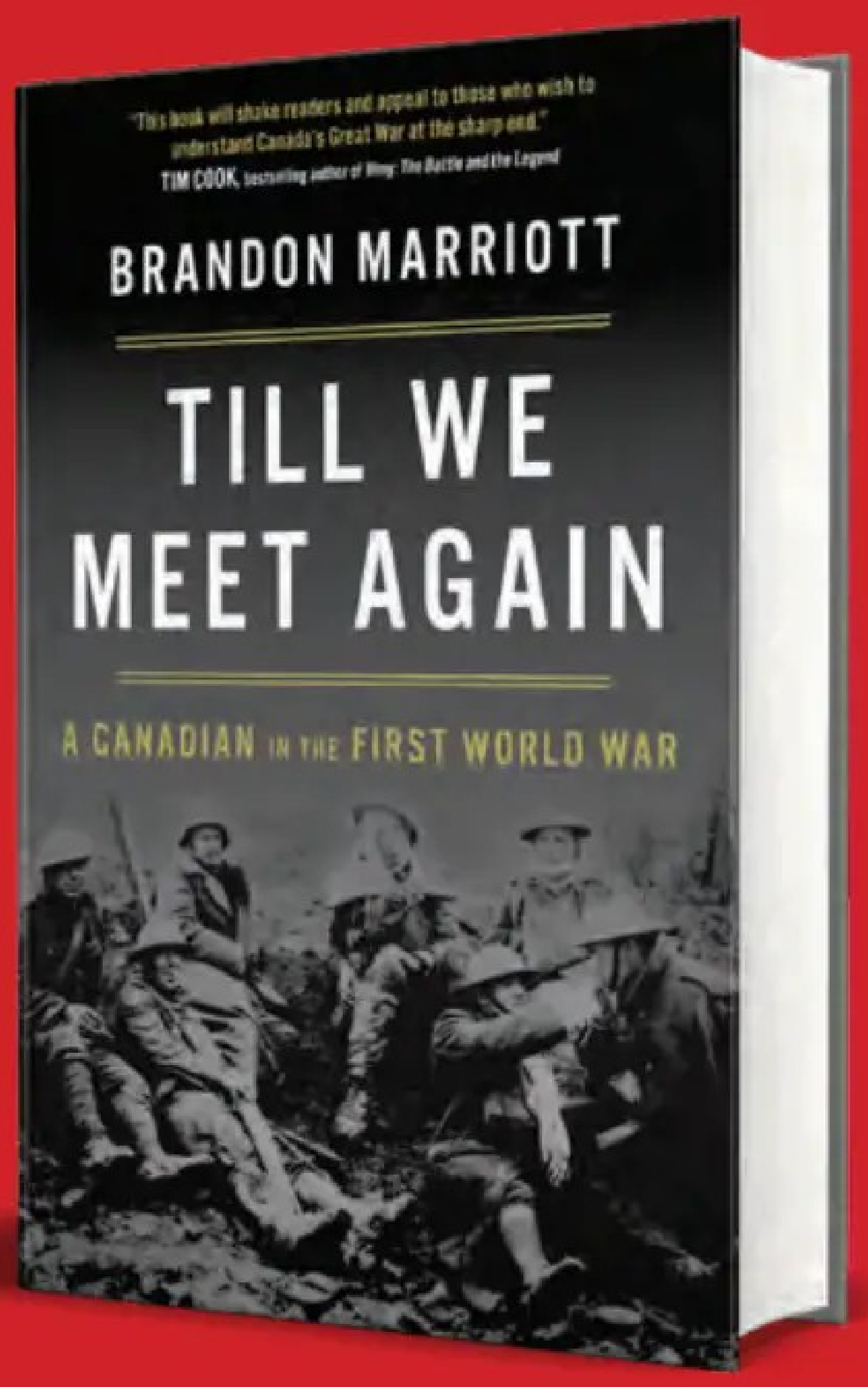
Duong's matter-of-fact narrative has little room for regret even though he grew up in the shadow of some of the war's most vicious fighting. Like the small scar beside his left eye, he always felt his childhood was best ignored. As readers, we are fortunate that he changed his mind.

Douglas & McIntyre, 306 pages, $24.95

Reviewed by **Frank B. Edwards**

"This is one soldier's graphic story about a war that summoned more than 600,000 Canadians to arms when the national population was still below eight million. It is a powerful reminder that Canadians, when challenged, will fight like hell when fundamental principles are on the line."

—LINDEN MACINTYRE,
Giller Award-winning author of *The Bishop's Man*



Not since Tim Cook's magisterial works about the First World War, or Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* has a book about a soldier's life at the sharp end been told with such humour, gravitas, and in a heart-pounding narrative that drops you behind enemy lines. The perfect, unforgettable read for anyone who wants to better understand what life was like for the boys behind the wire.

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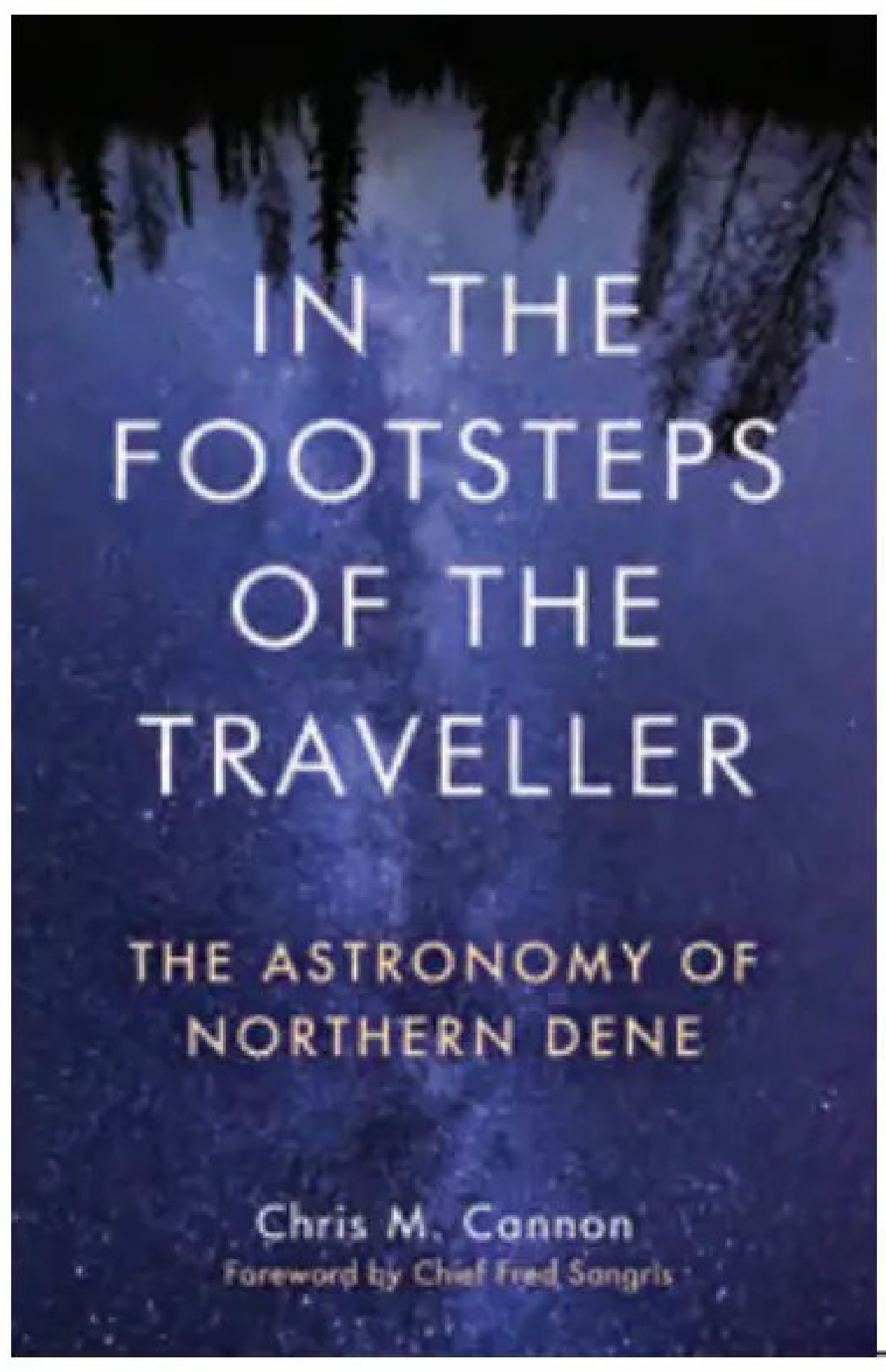
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE TRAVELLER
THE ASTRONOMY OF NORTHERN DENE
Chris M. Cannon
Foreword by Chief Fred Sangris

In the Footsteps of the Traveller:

The Astronomy of Northern Dene

by Chris M. Cannon

If western-trained astronomers seek answers in the stars, so, too, do Indigenous Peoples. Take Northern Dene, a grouping of Tribes and First Nations in what we now call Alaska, Yukon and the Northwest Territories, for example. Like astronomers and astrophysicists, Dene have always looked up, way up, for knowledge, but also for wayfinding, be it on land or in the spirit world. In his new book, *In the Footsteps of the Traveller*, Chris M. Cannon, an assistant professor at the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, shows how the realm overhead is linked with the realm underfoot.

Drawing on a 15-year period of research journeys to Dene lands to interact with, interview and learn from Elders and Knowledge Holders, Cannon has divided his work into chapters that reveal how Dene perceive and use the night sky, including realizing vision quests, telling time, wayfinding on land and dividing the year into seasons. The chapters feature illustrations of constellations as seen through Northern Dene eyes and tables with their names in different Dene, or Athapascan, languages. The result is both encyclopedic and personal. For instance, in one of myriad interviews, Cannon introduces the reader to Fred Sangris, who is Yellowknives Dene; Sangris showed the author how he navigates safely by placing poles on the ground that point in the direction he wants to travel, using the stars as a guide.

The book itself is a guide — albeit a hefty one — for outsiders to glimpse Northern Dene culture. In a time when what remains of traditional knowledge and wisdom is at risk of being lost, it could also serve as a guide for Dene themselves. For people who, for whatever reason, no longer live in proximity to their communities and are seeking to reclaim belonging and Indigeneity, the book is a chart for a different kind of traveller. There's a human universality to looking up to see our past and chart a course forward, and Northern Dene are no exception. What the rest of the world hasn't realized — or, perhaps, has chosen to ignore — as Cannon suggests, is that the knowledge of the stars these cultures and communities hold goes far back in time.

With a density of galactic proportions, the book may, no doubt, be somewhat intimidating for the casual reader. But for nerds like me, it opens a universe of discoveries, not only of the constellations that figure in different Northern Dene cultures but also of how these relate to Dene languages and cultures as they're practised on the ground. To look to the stars is a form of practical and figurative wayfinding; it's a form of, and a tool for, survival. And as such, it shows that ways of being practised since time immemorial are as relevant today as they surely were at the advent of humanity on this continent.

University of Manitoba Press, 448 pages, $34.95

Reviewed by **Susan Nerberg**, a Sámi writer squinting at the night sky from her home base in Montreal

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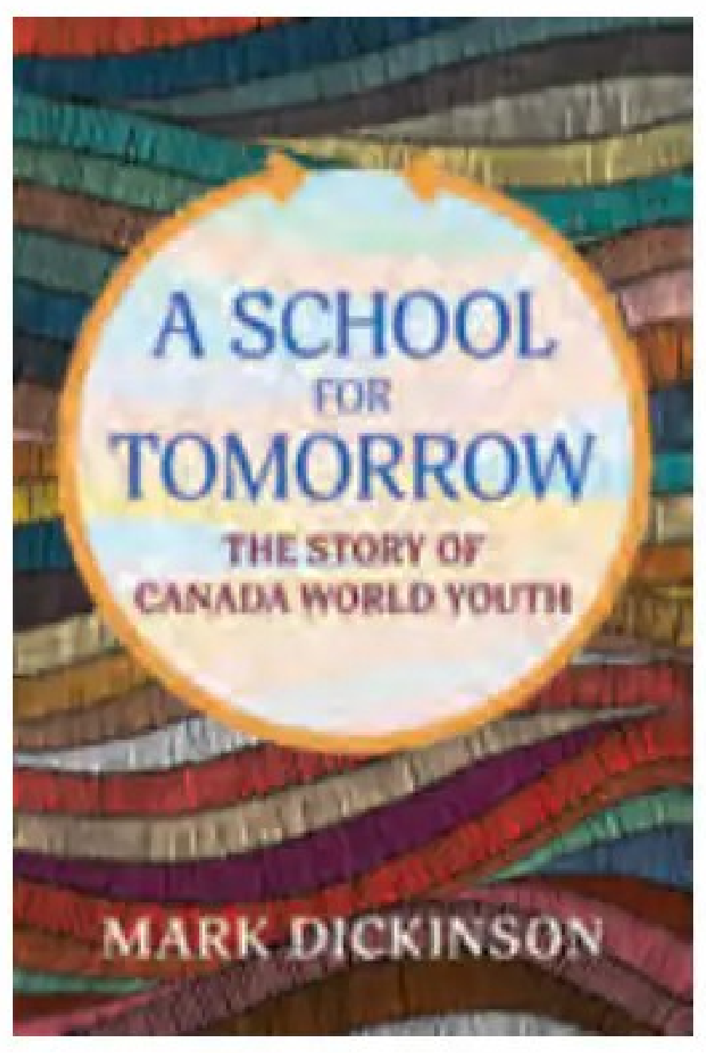
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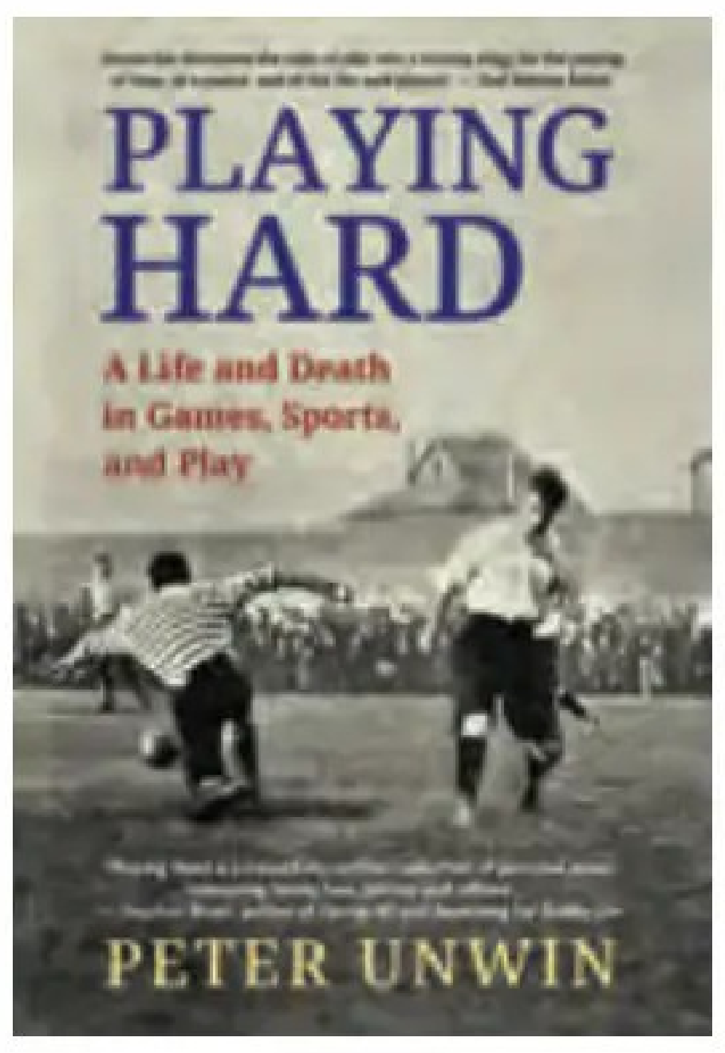
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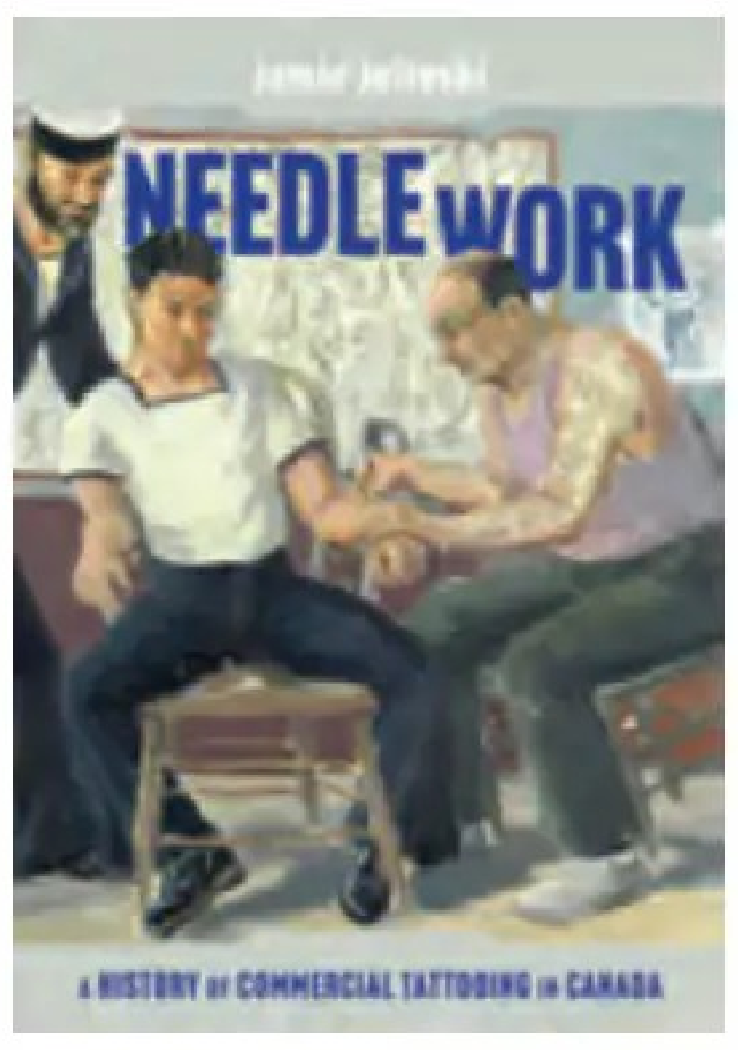
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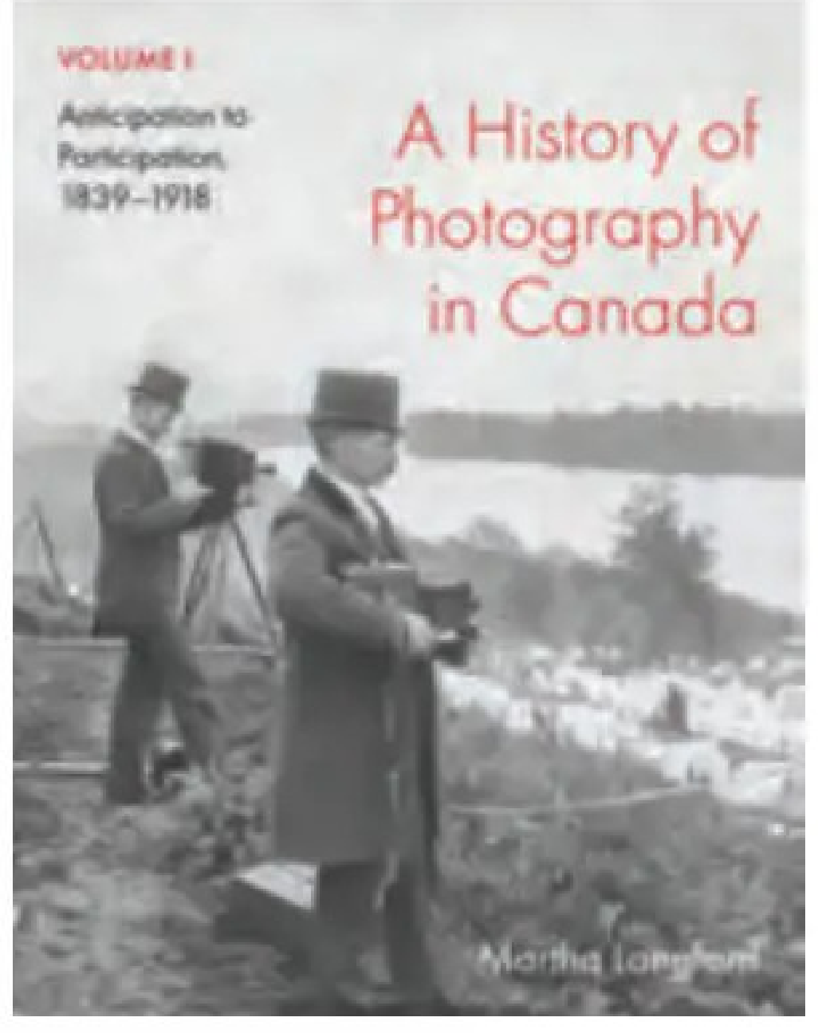
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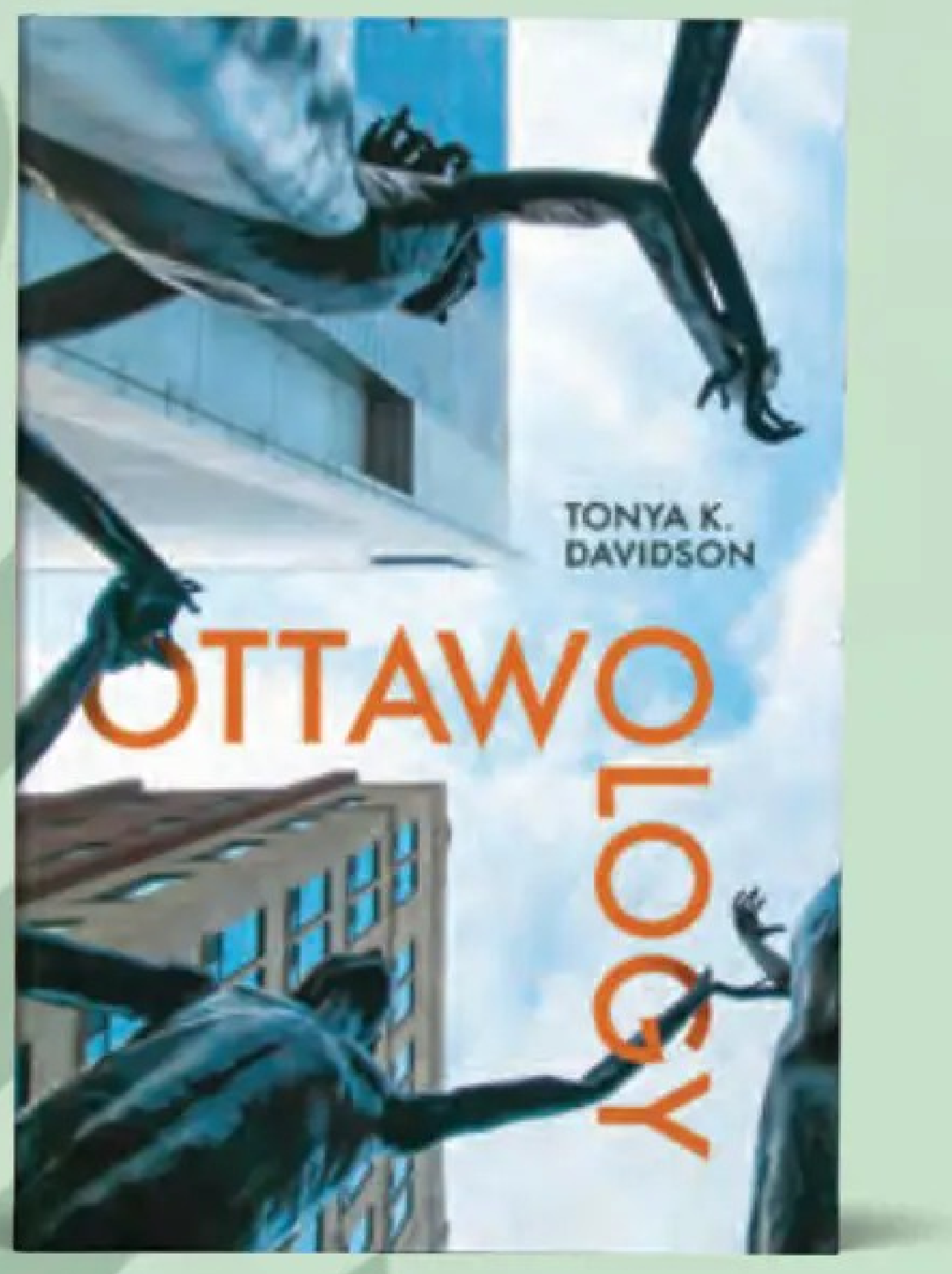
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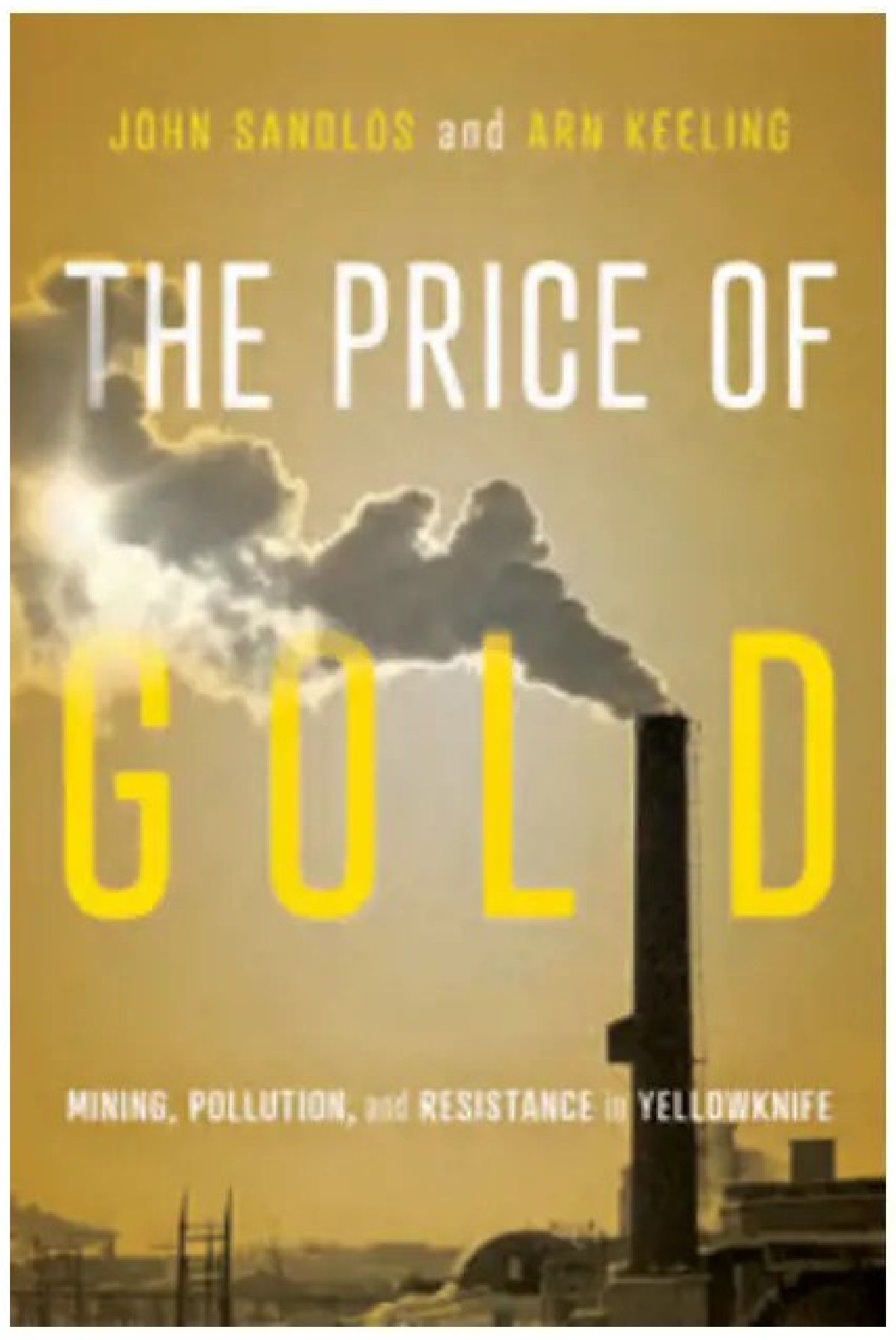
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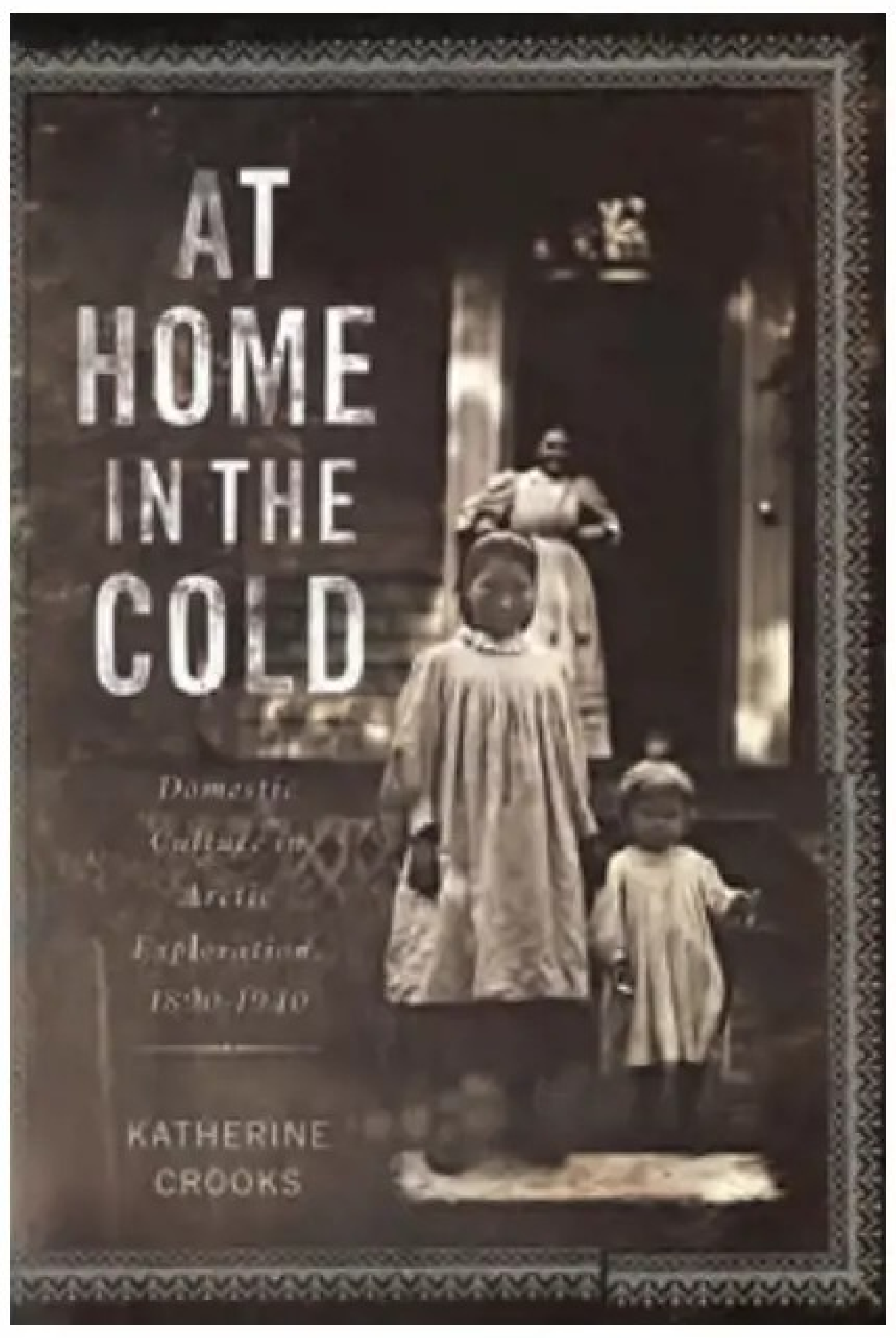
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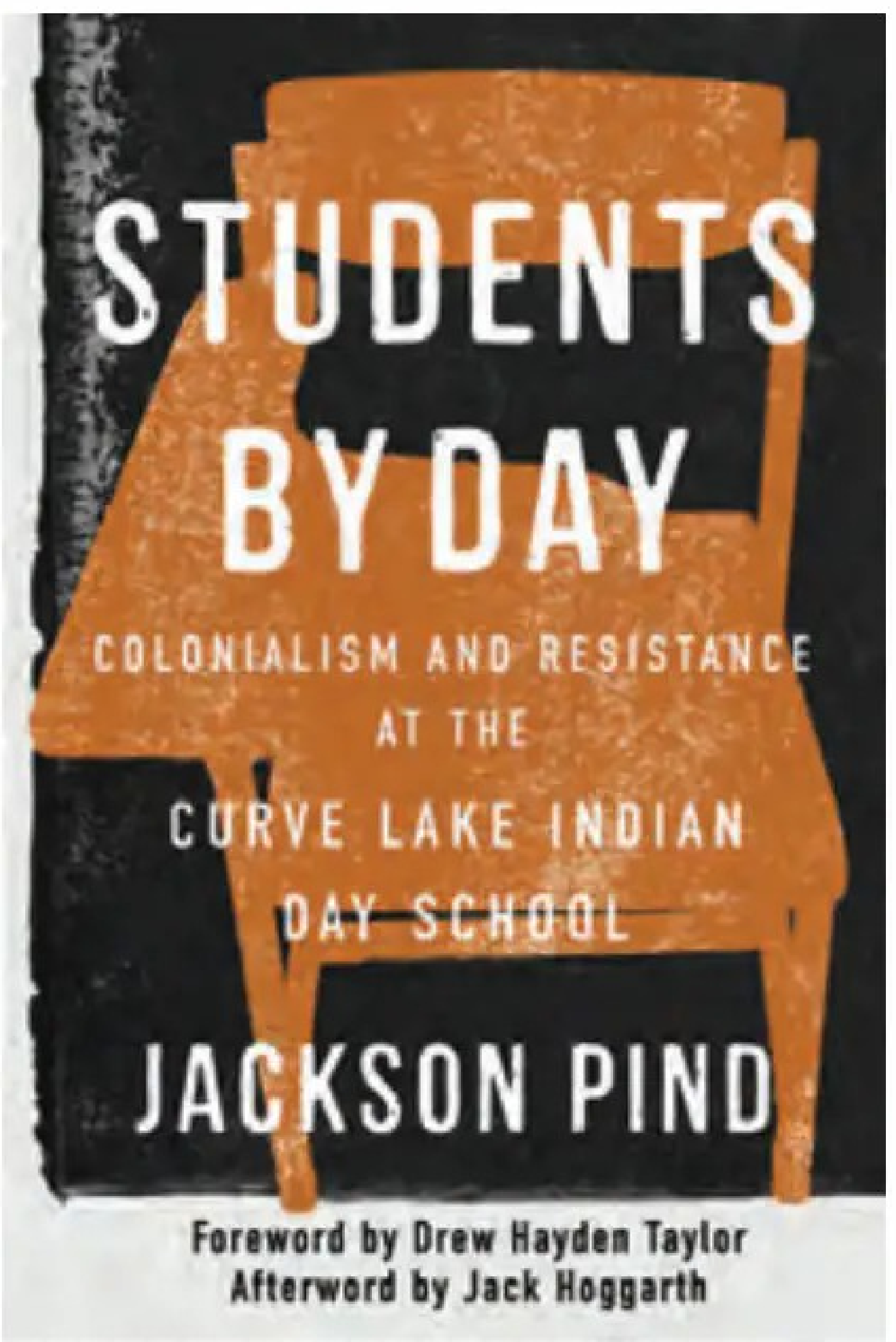
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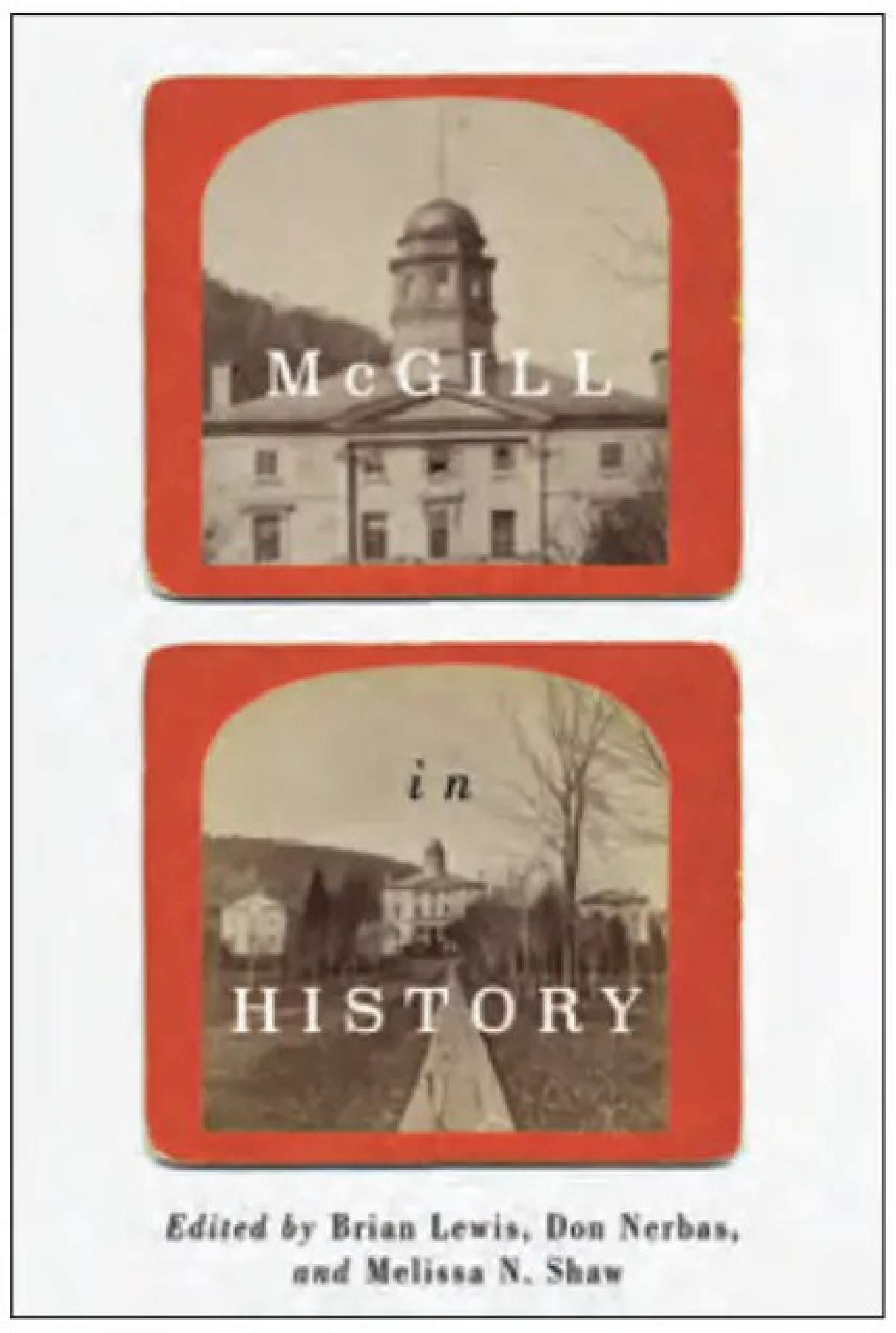
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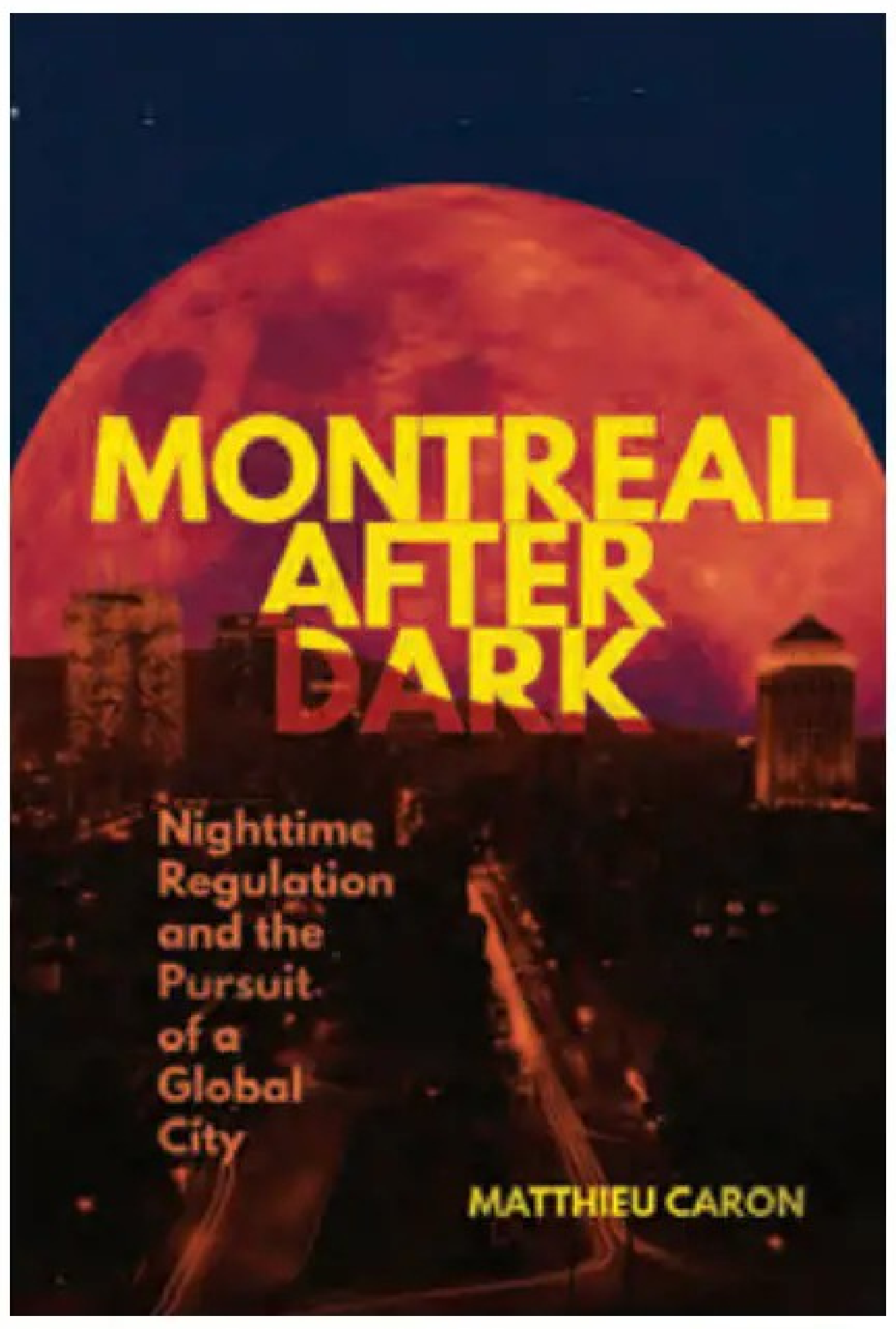
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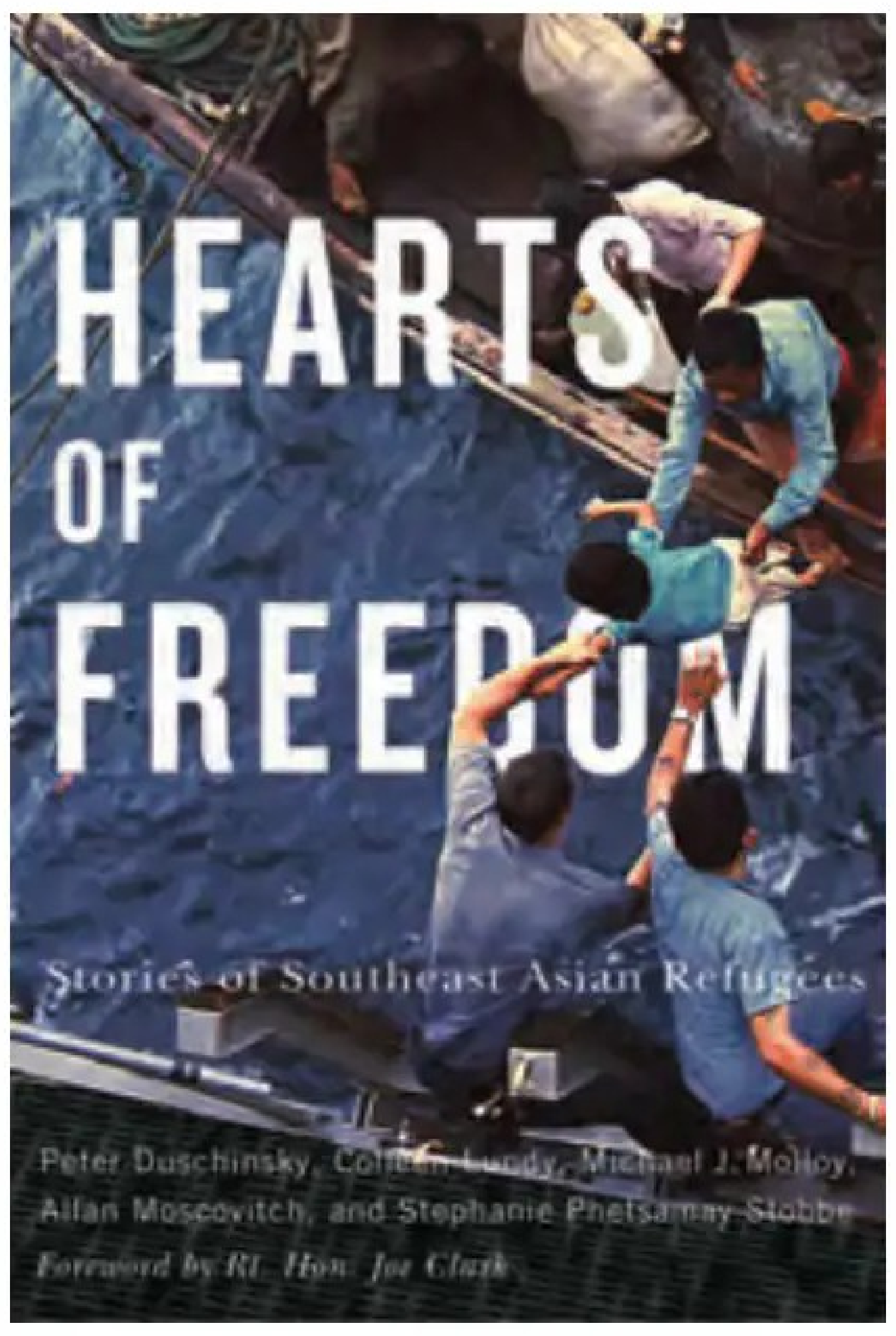
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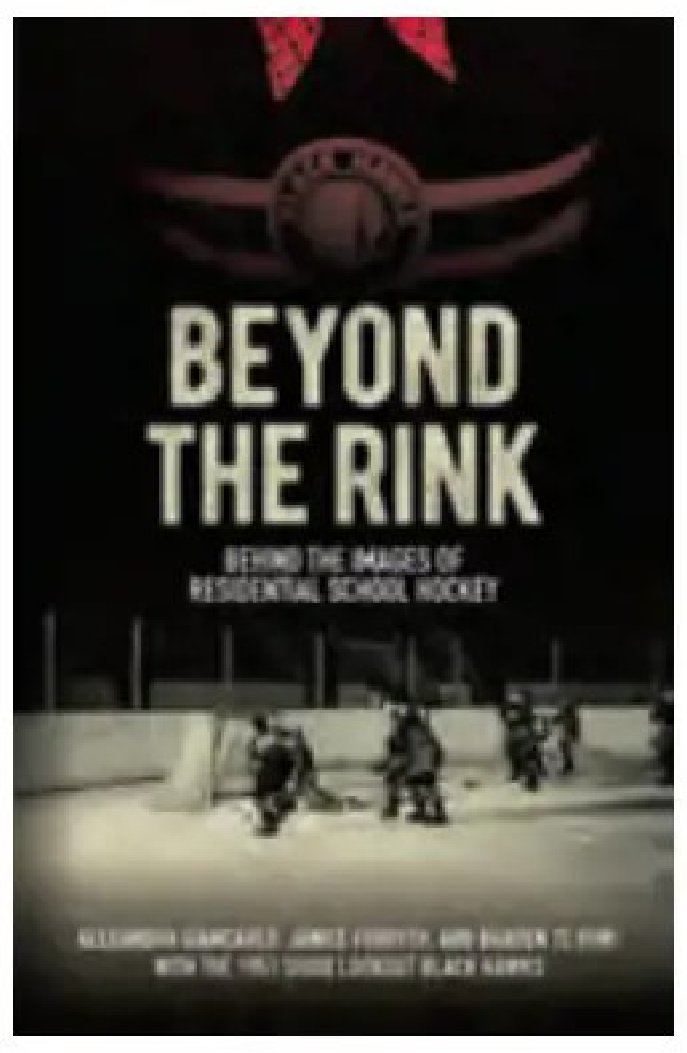
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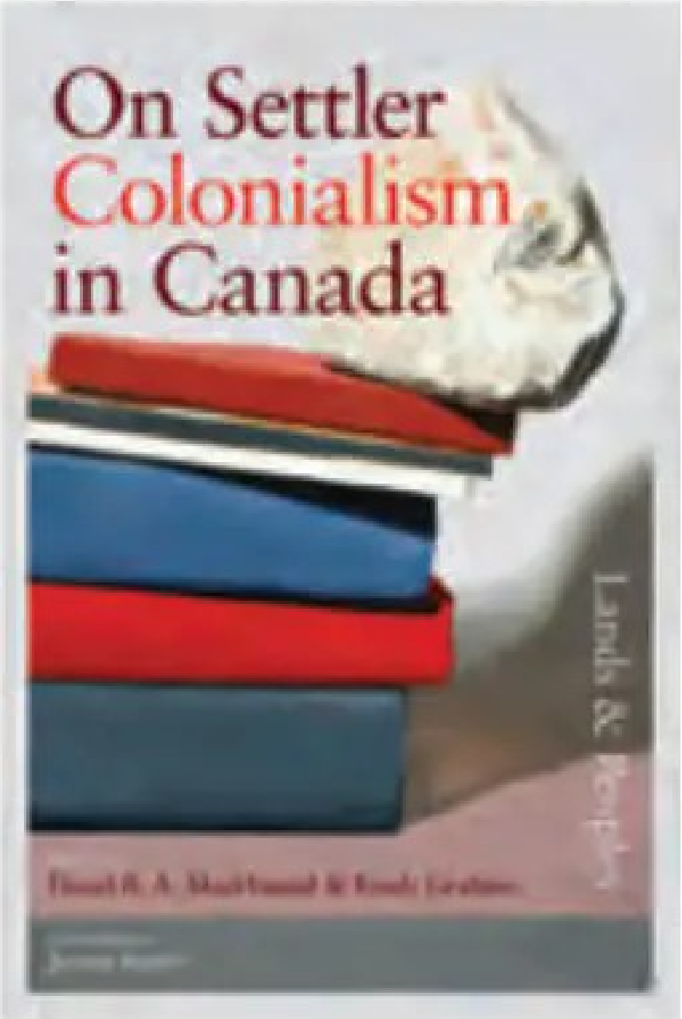
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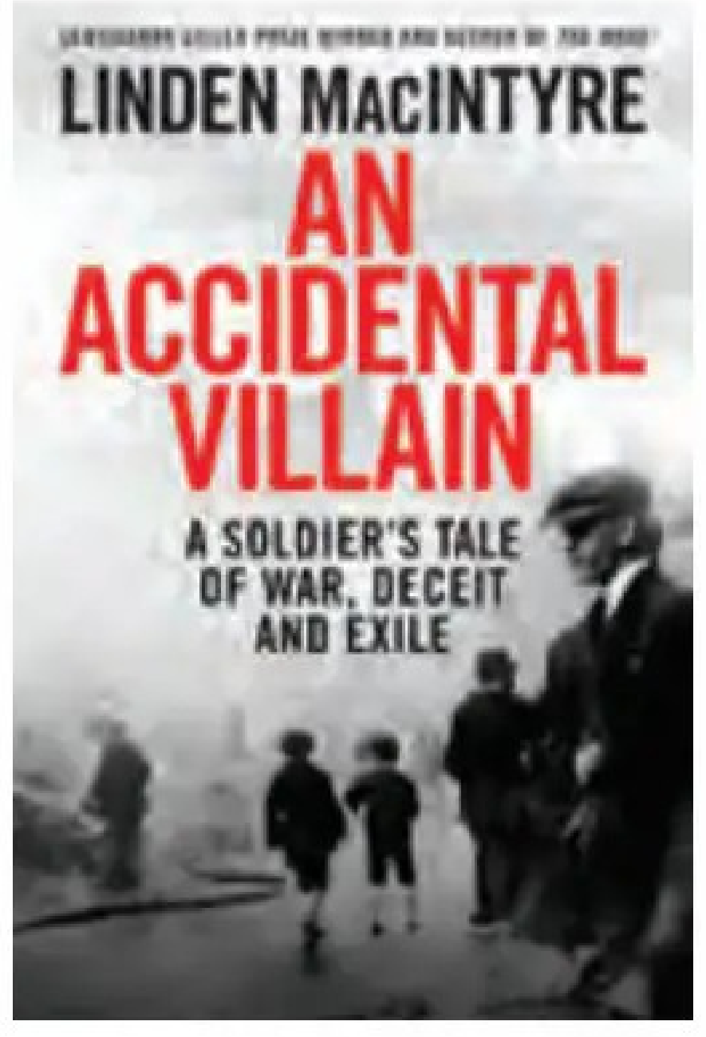
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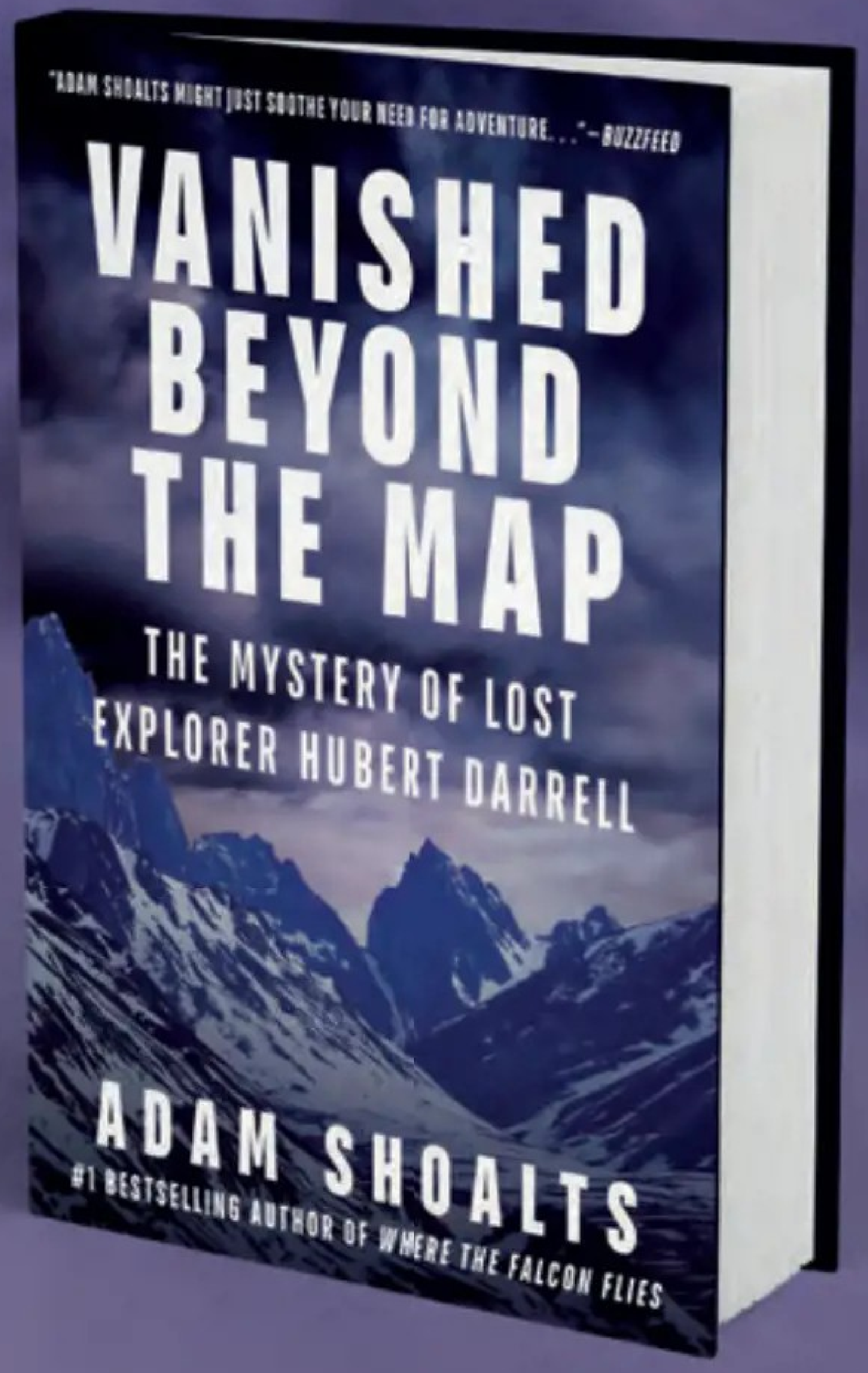
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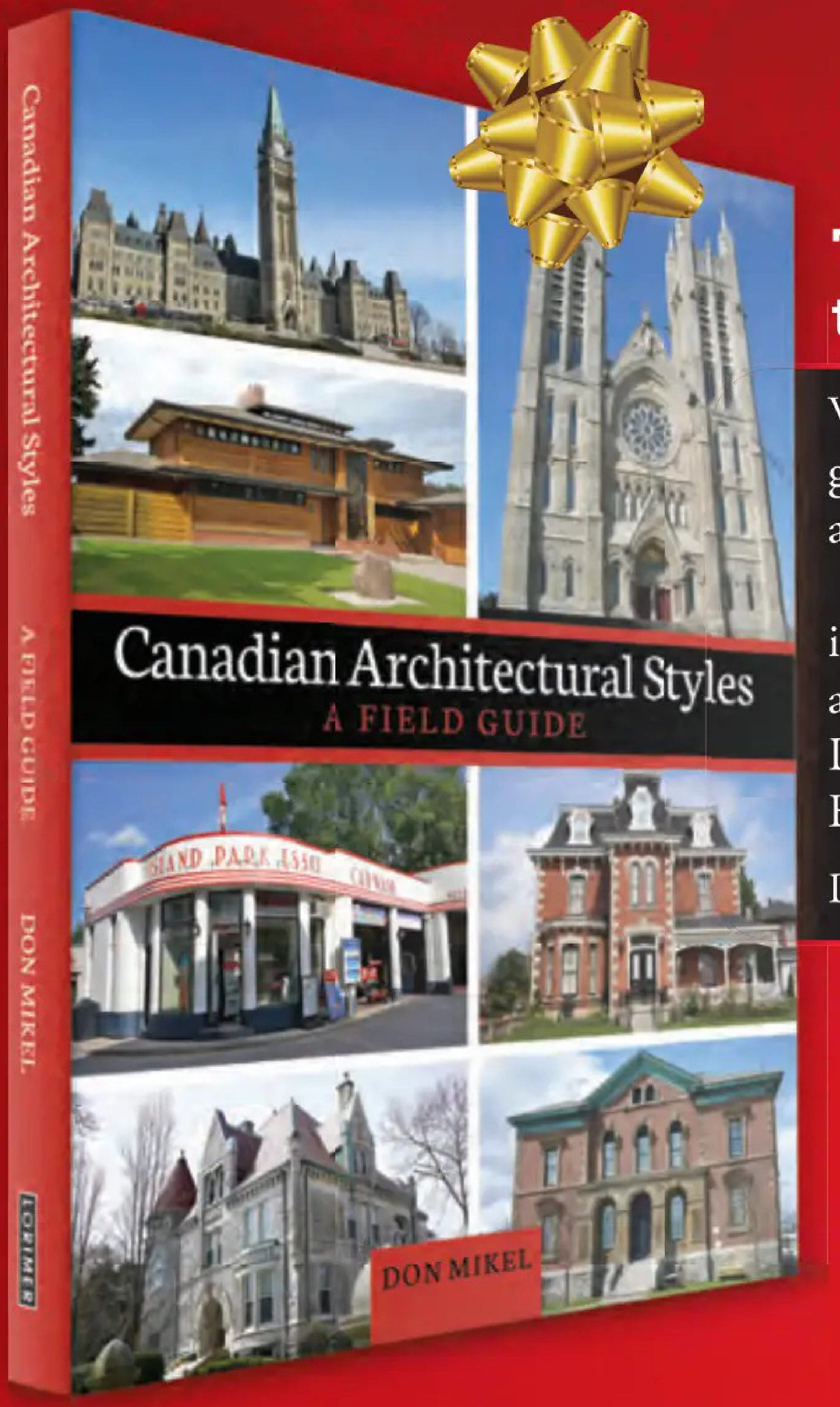
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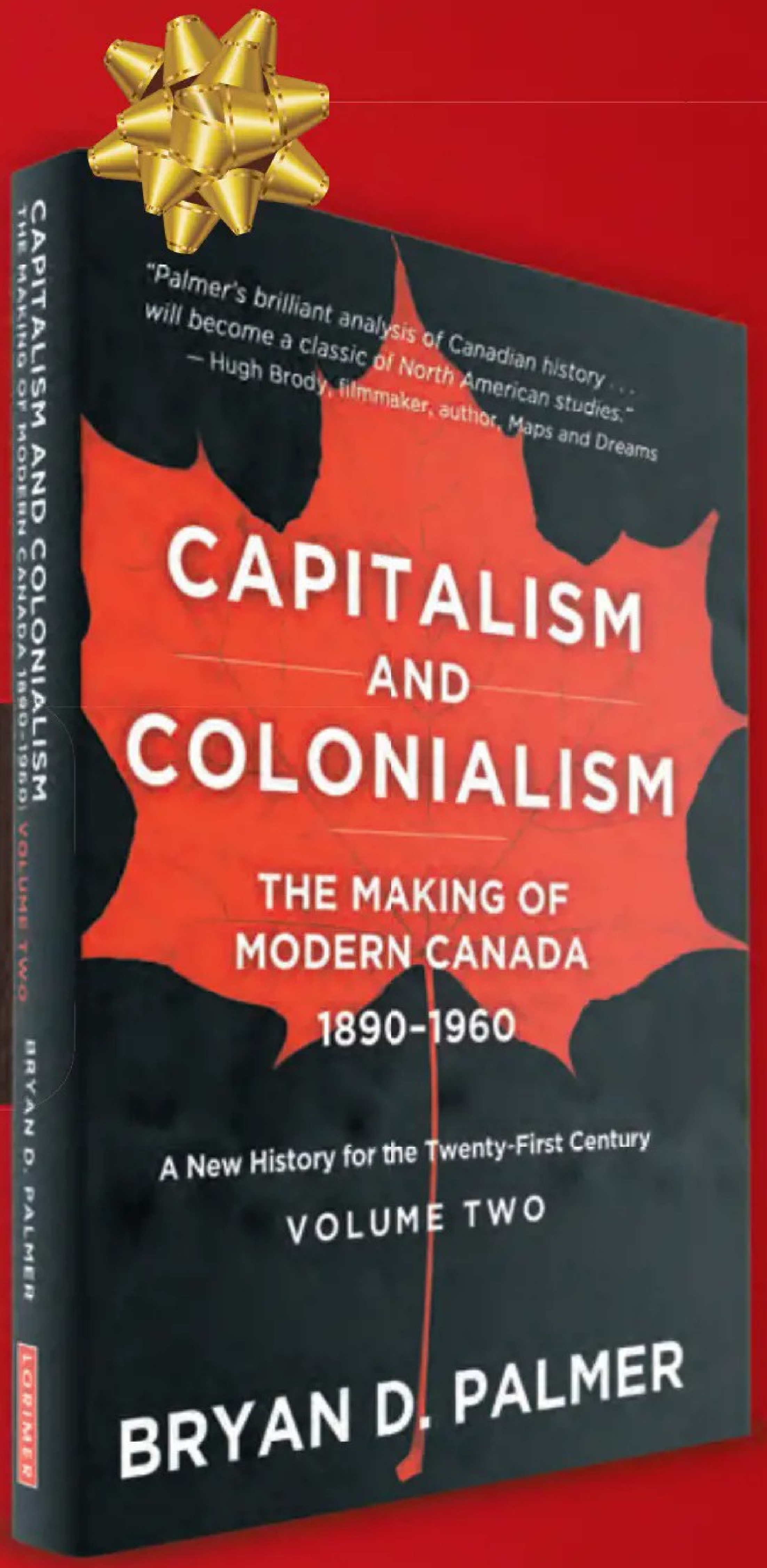
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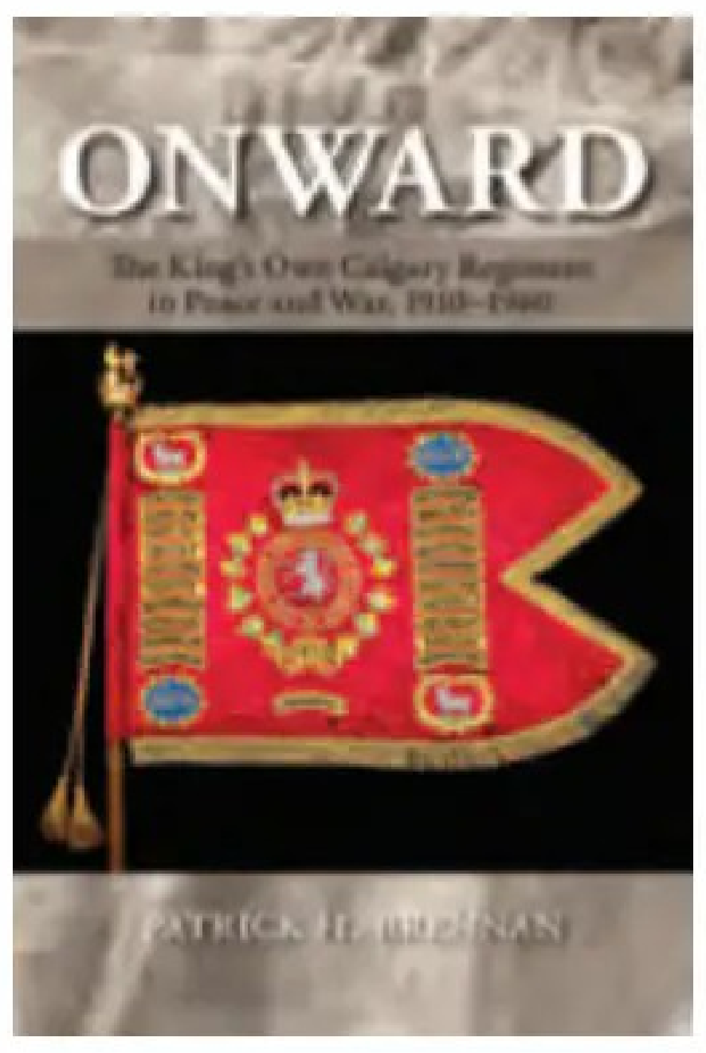
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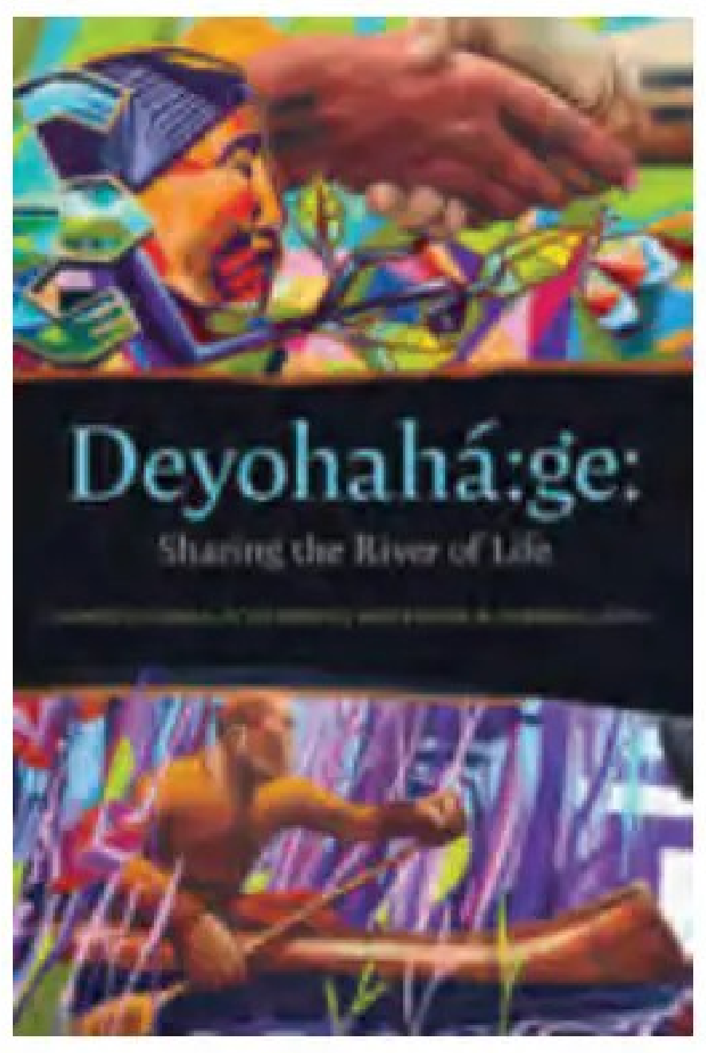
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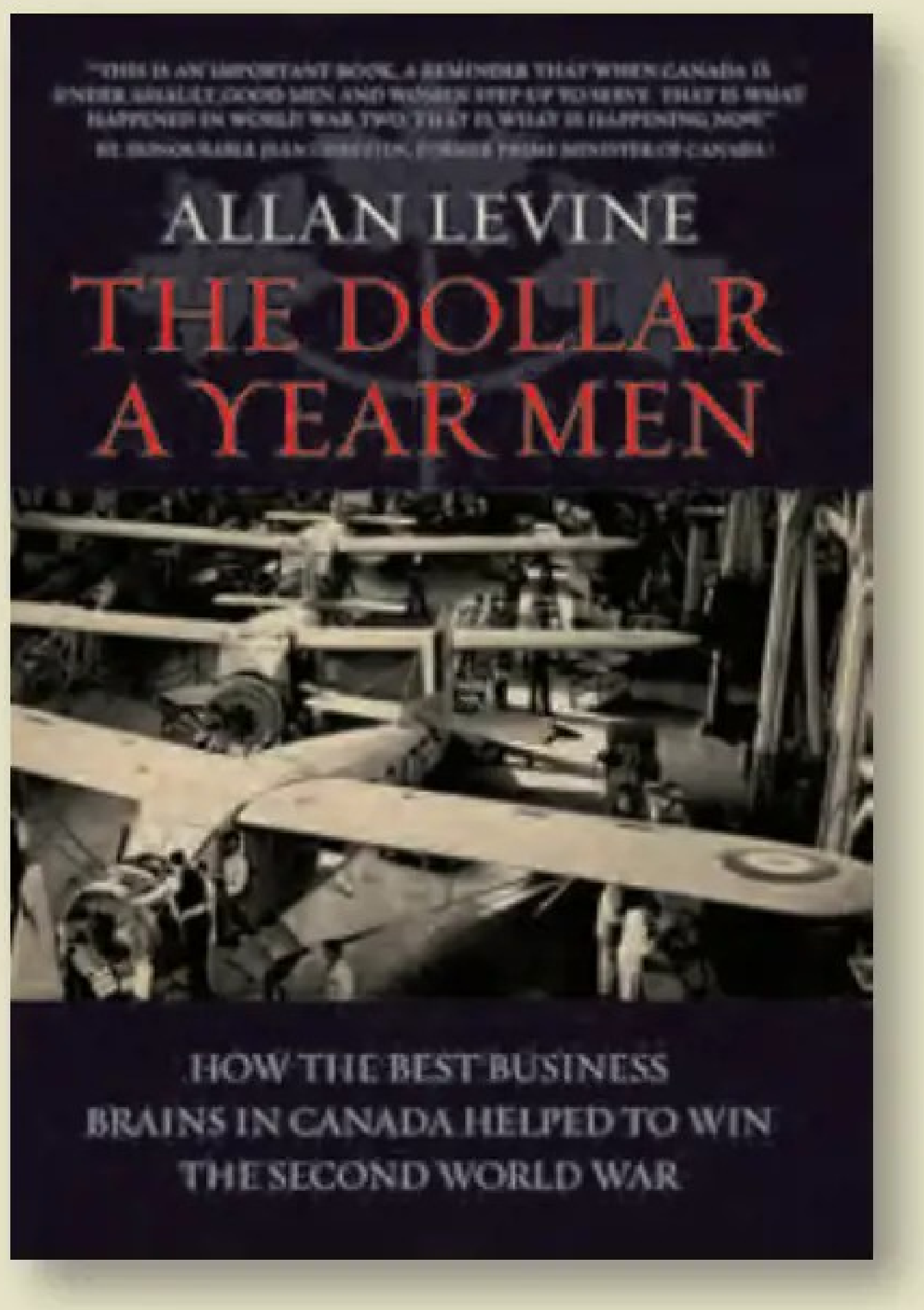
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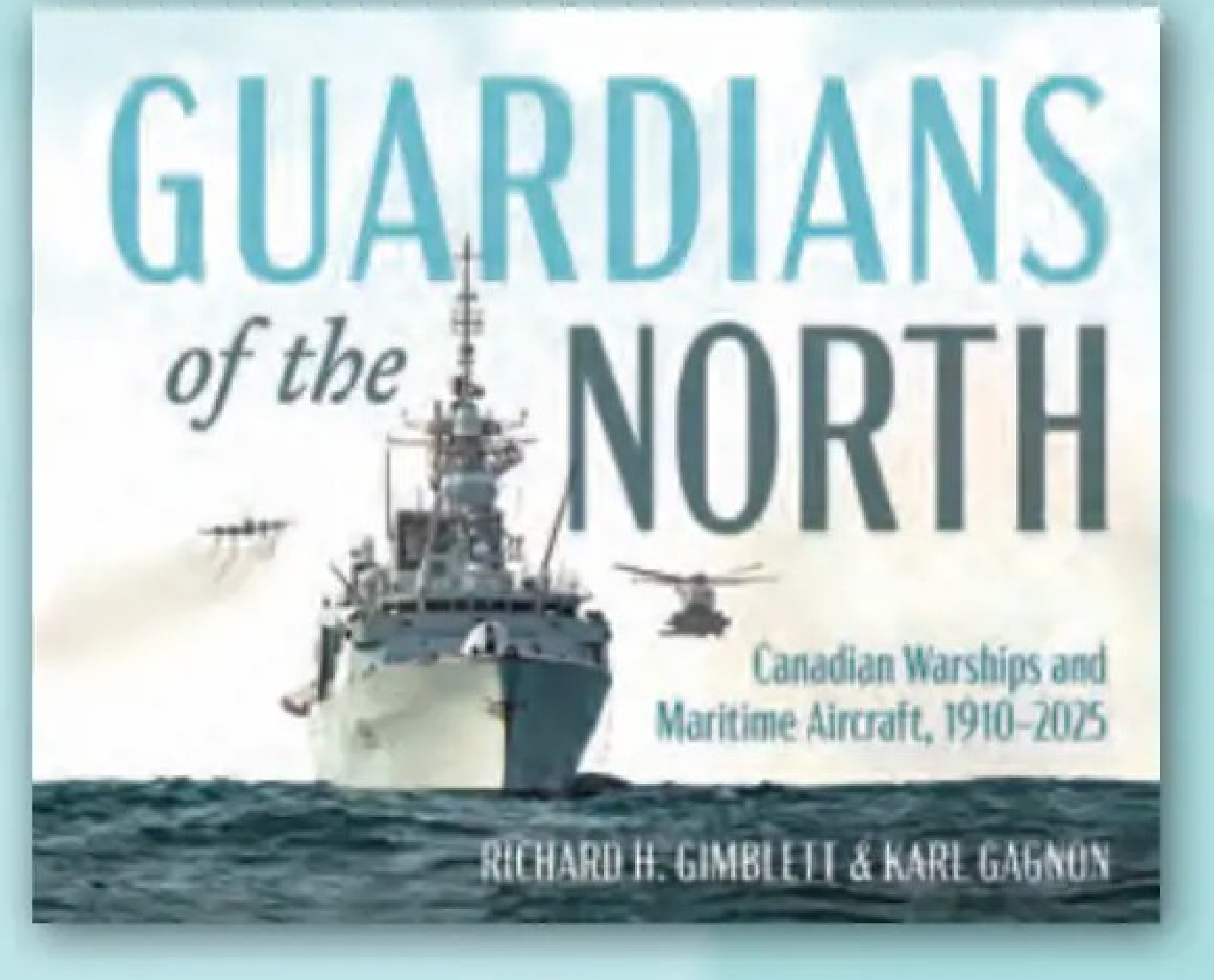
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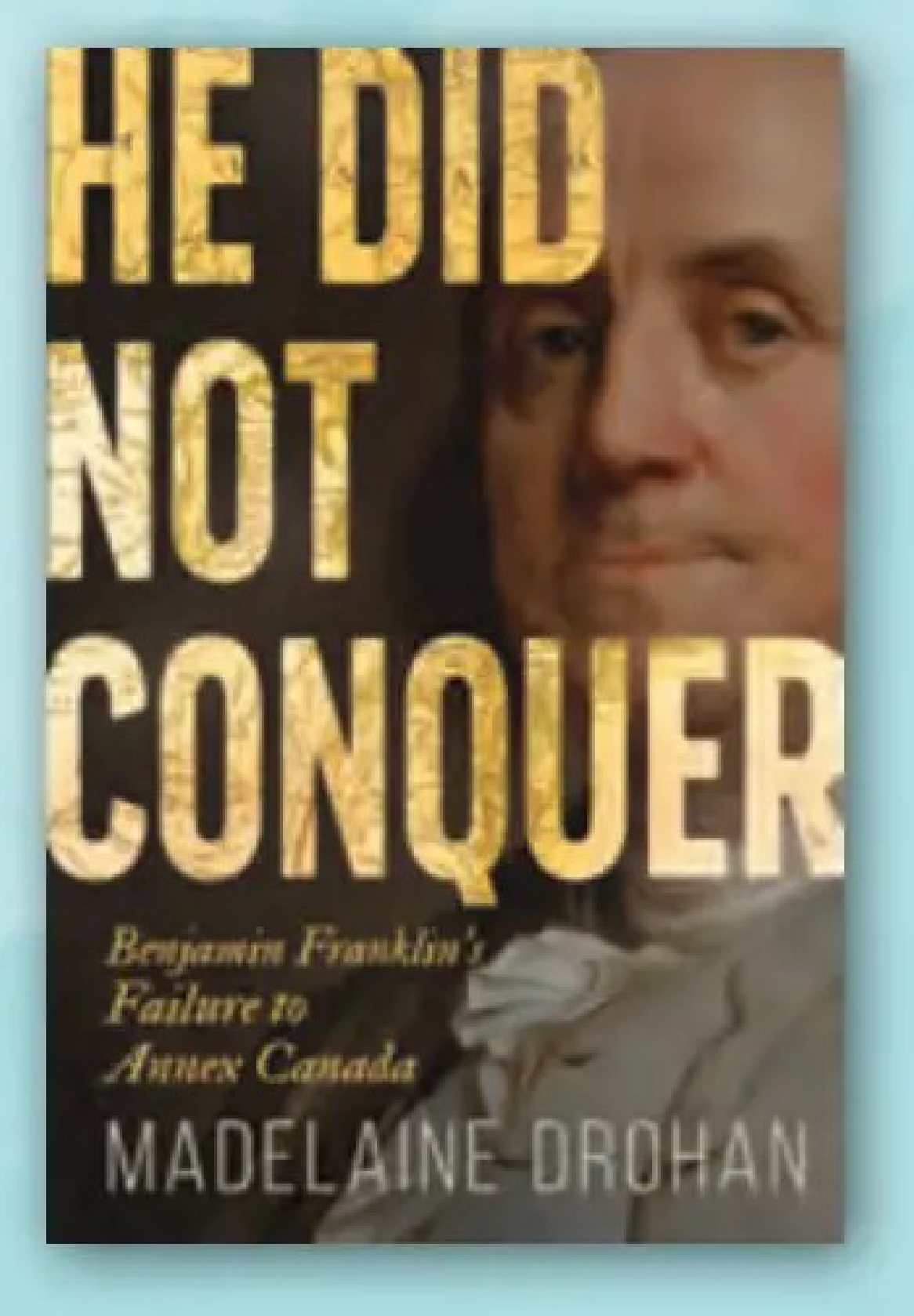
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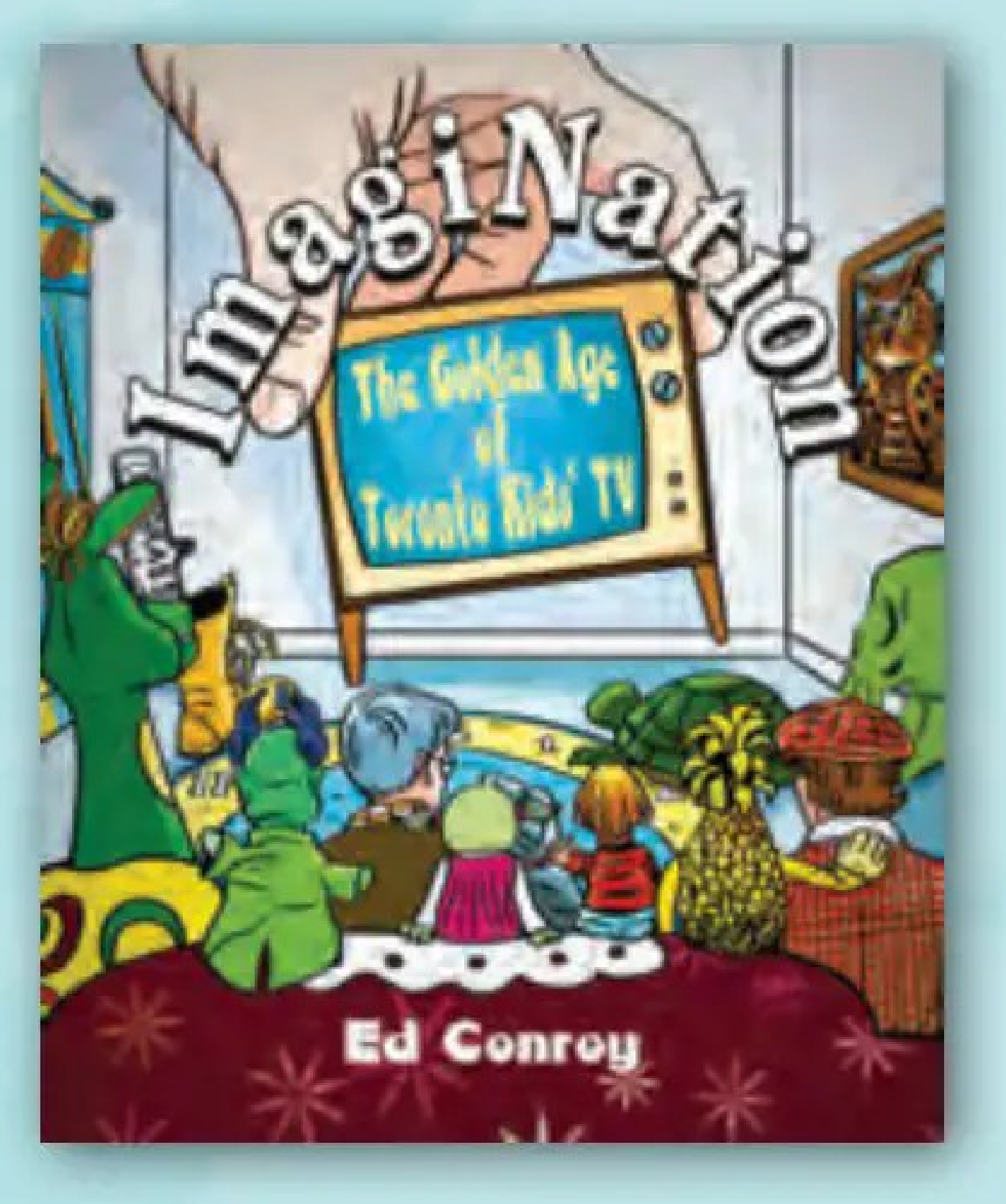
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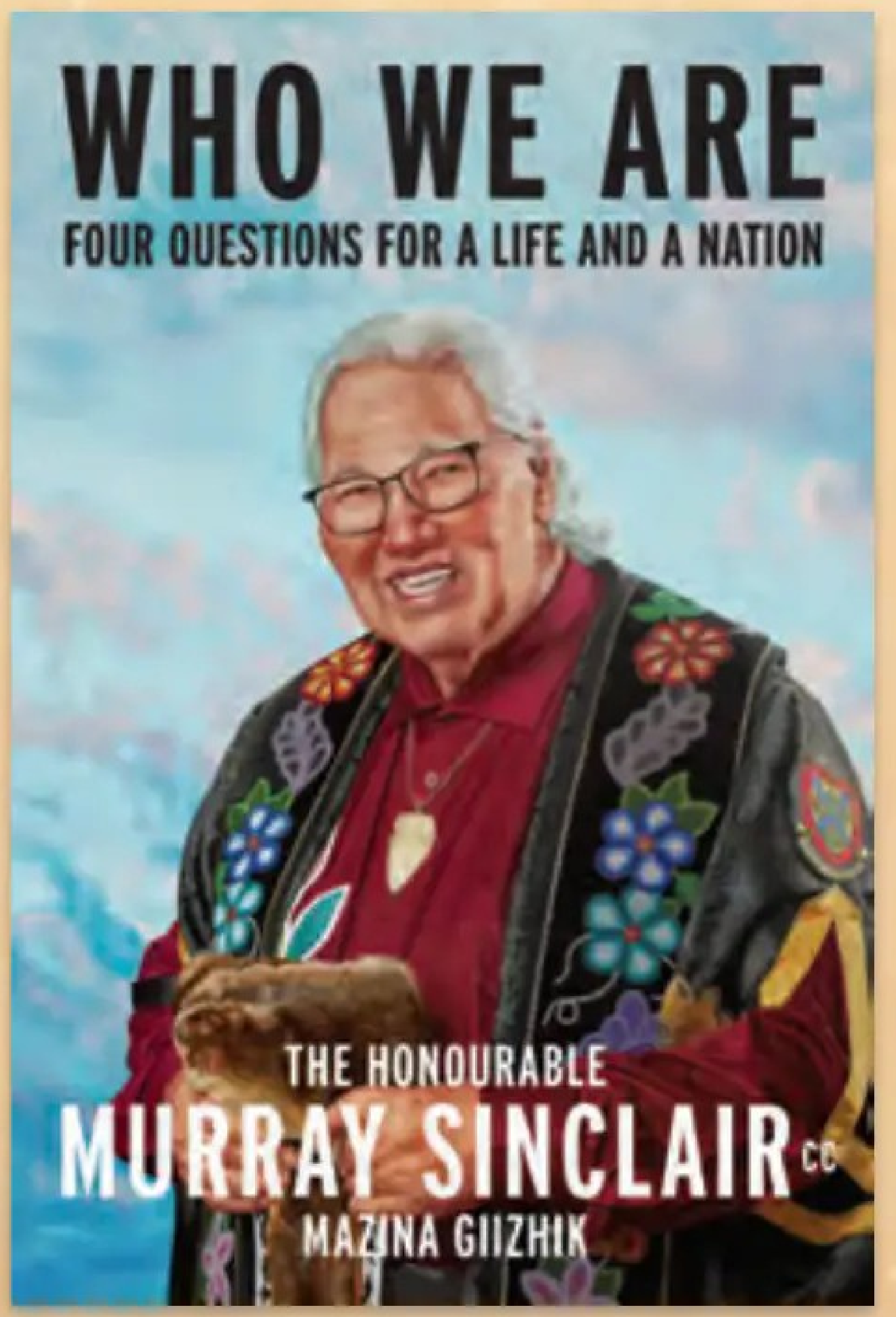
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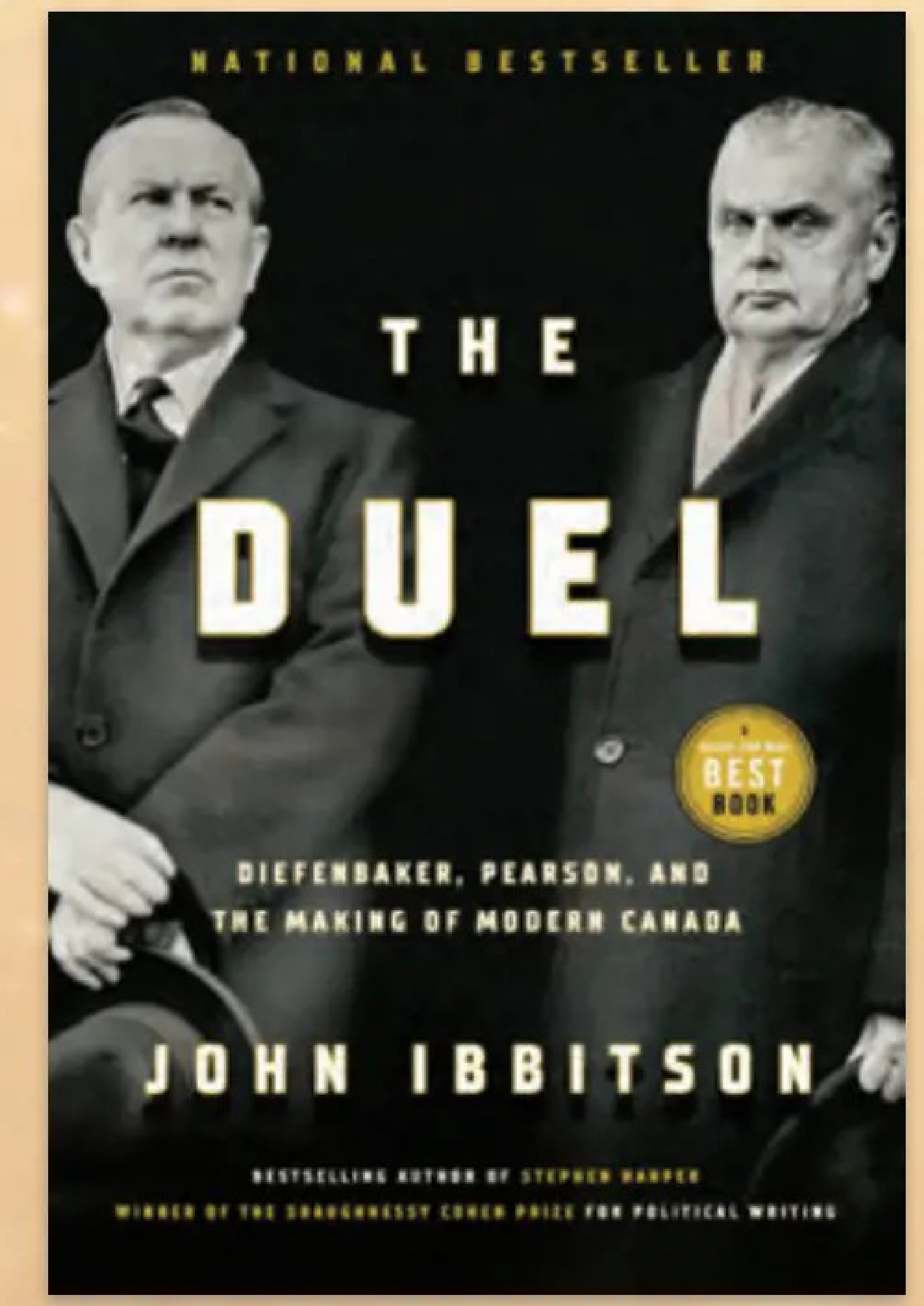
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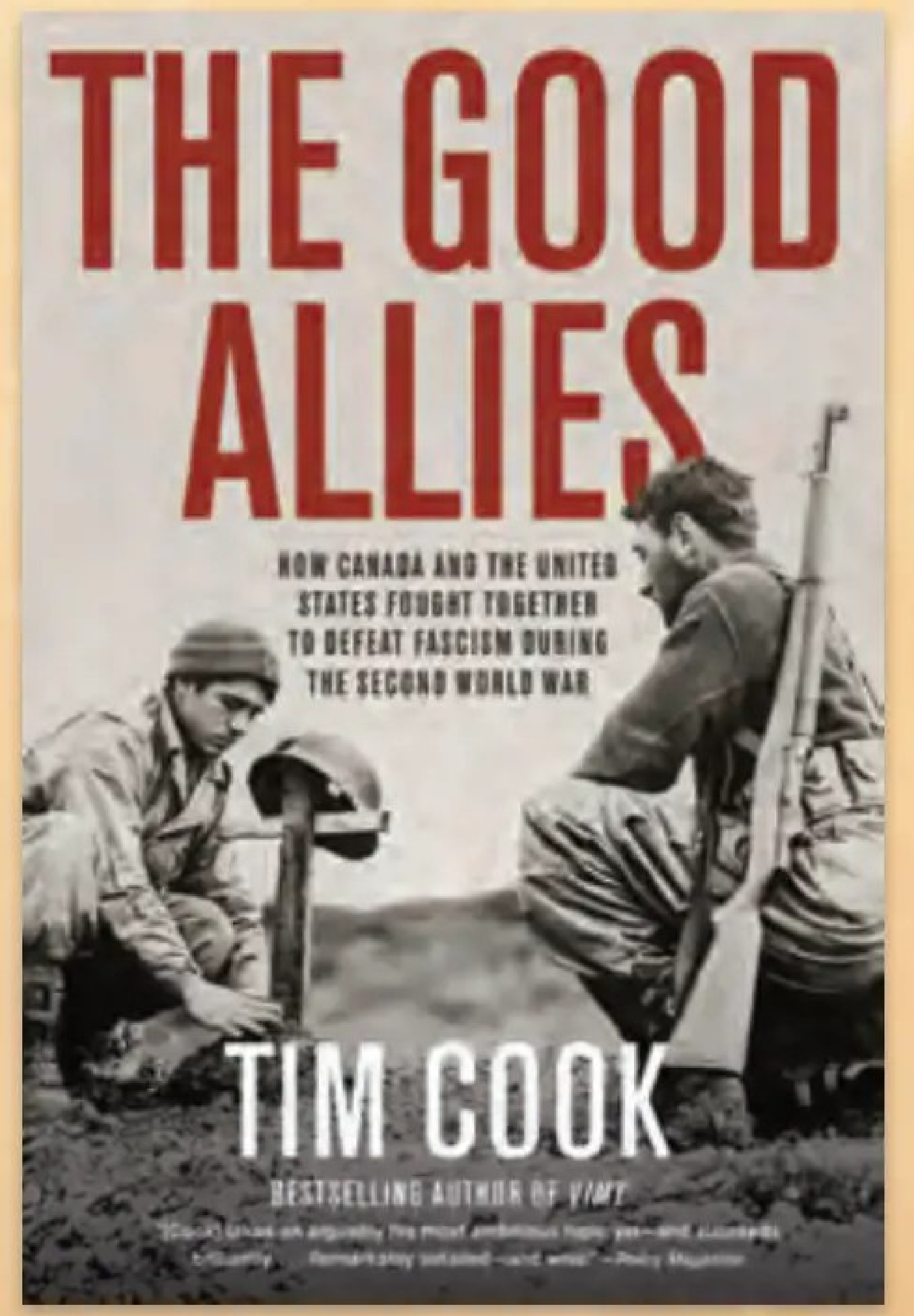
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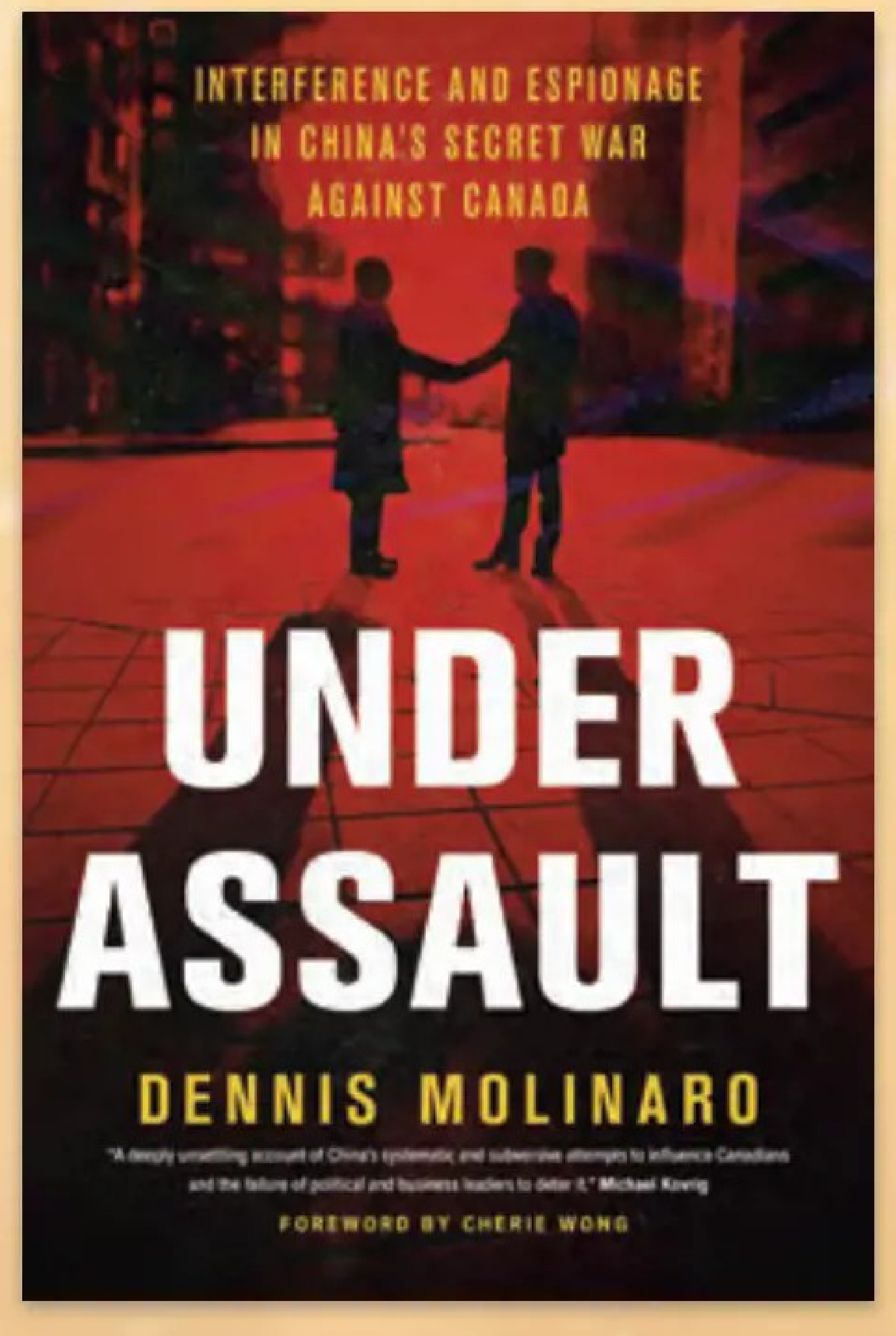
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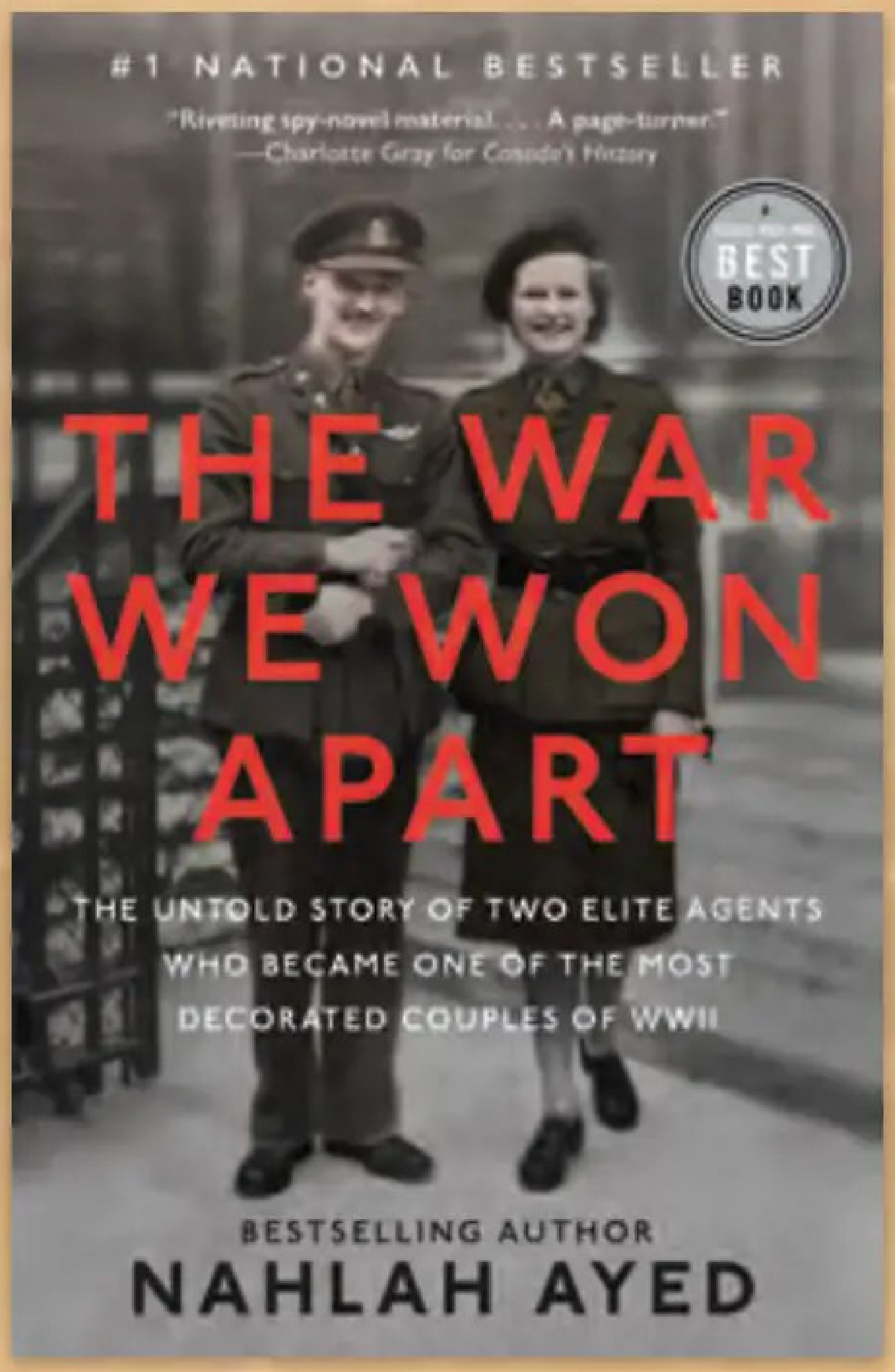
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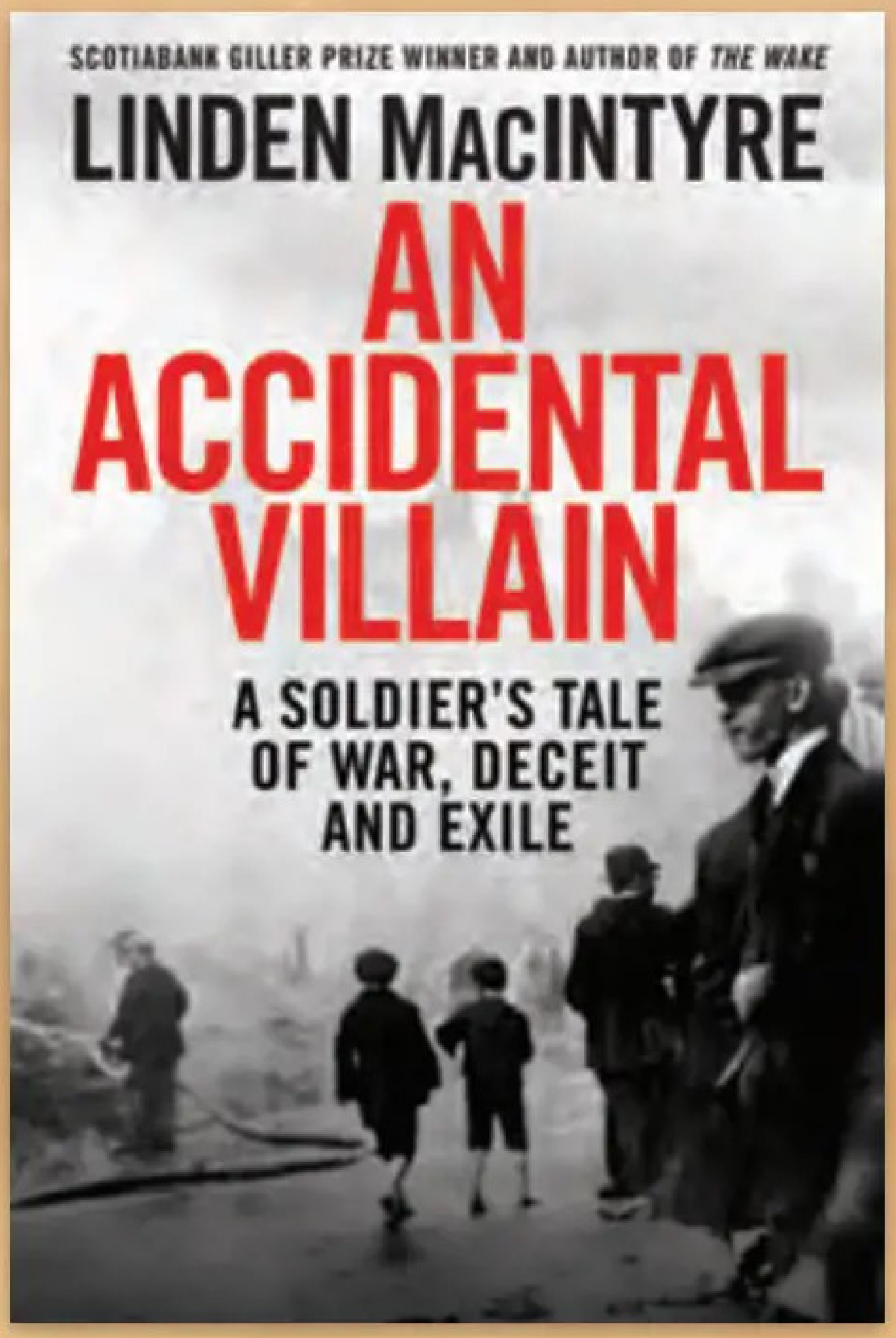
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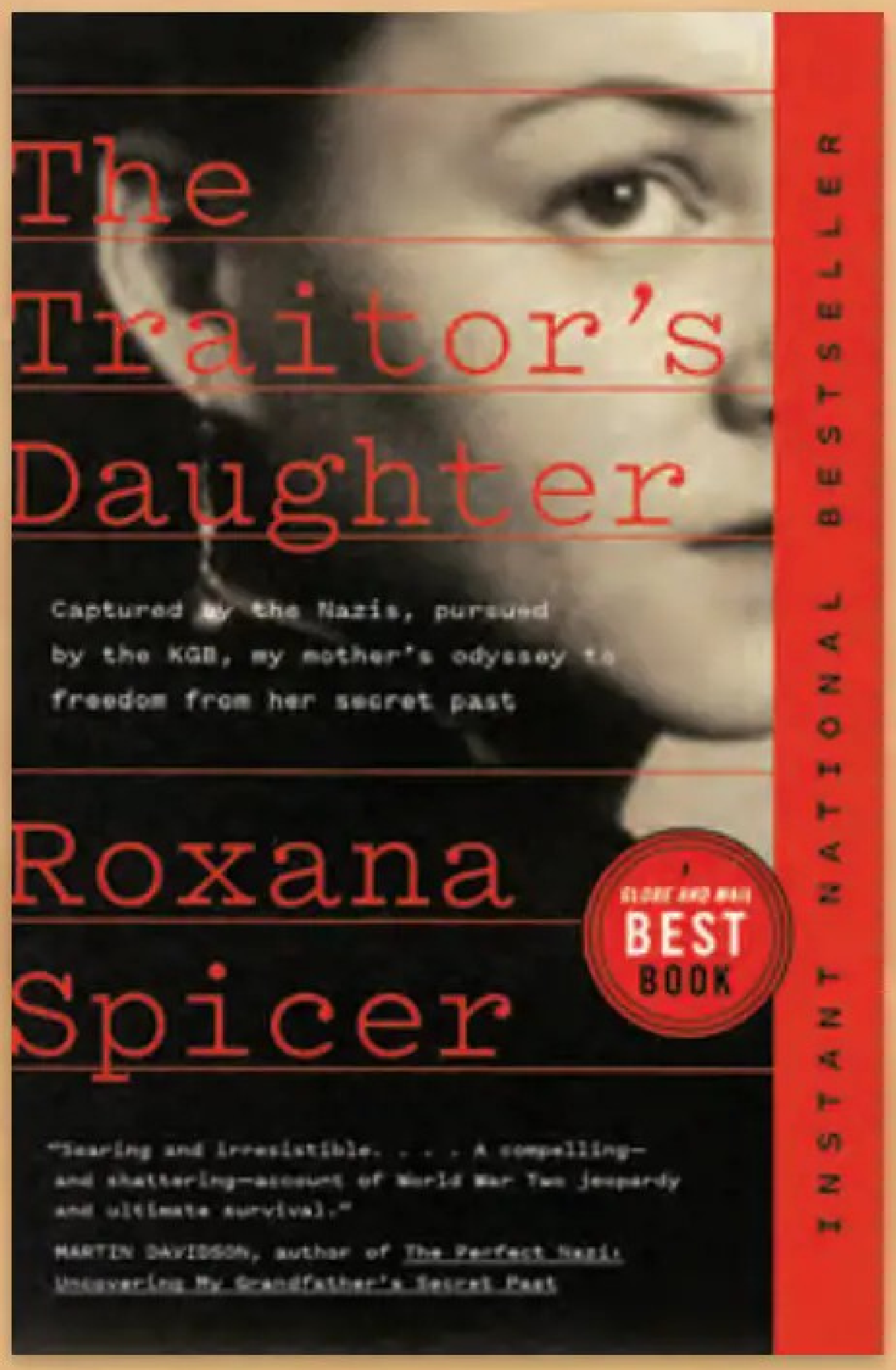
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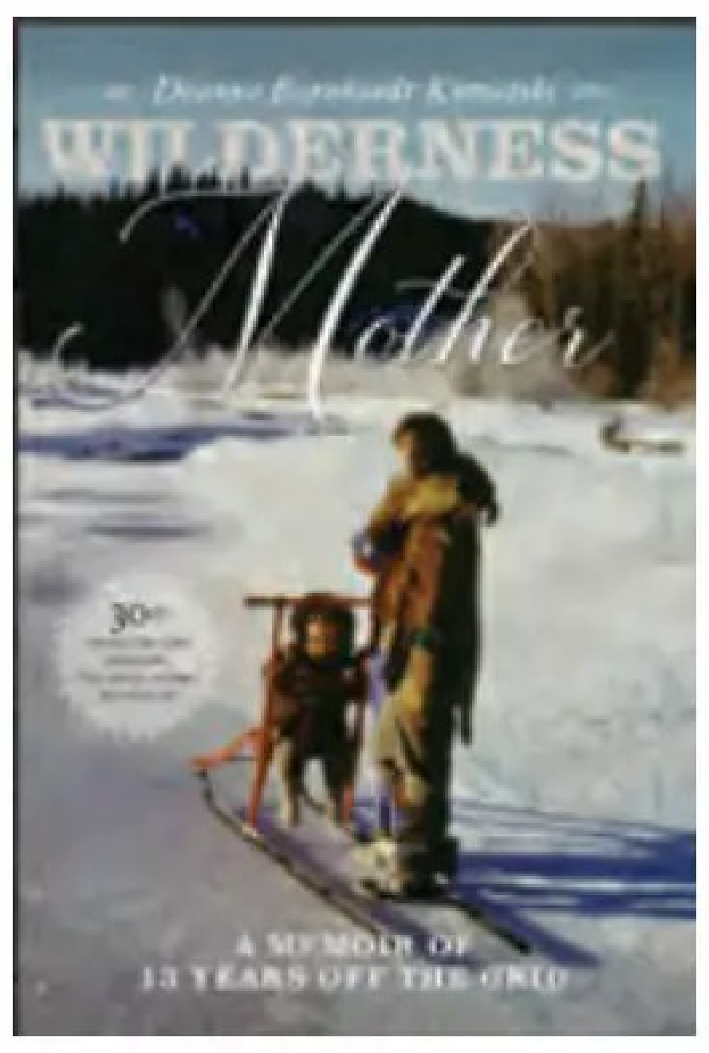
Penguin Random House Canada

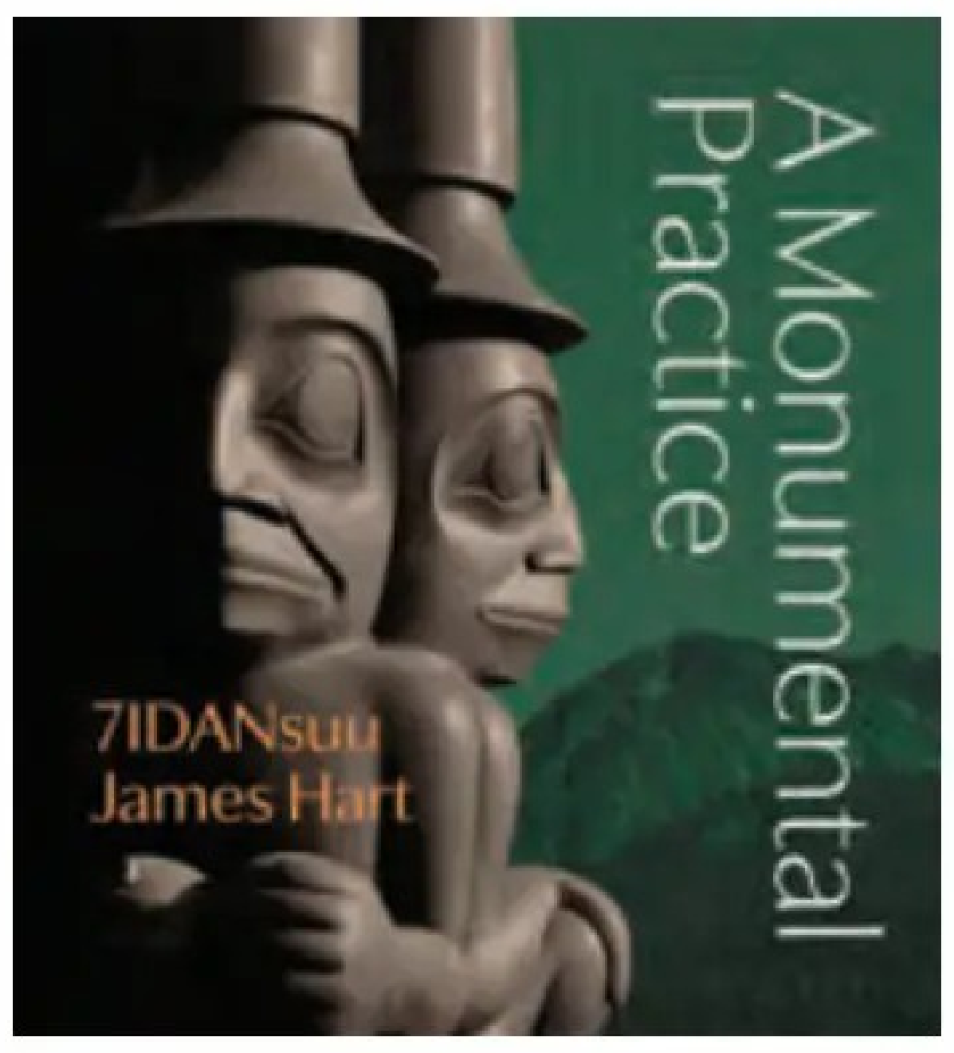


Wilderness Mother

by Deanna Barnhardt Kawatski

This wilderness classic of raising a family in the wilds of Northern Canada has been updated for its 30th anniversary. More than 160 kilometres from the nearest paved road and cut off from the outside world, Deanna Barnhardt Kawatski and her husband built a life in the stunning Ningunsaw Valley. She describes the family's self-sufficiency in building their home and growing food. But the unrelenting work of pioneer life is balanced with her deep love of the natural world.

242 pages, $24.95
ISBN 9781553807308
Published Oct. 6, 2025
Ronsdale Press



7IDANsuu James Hart

by 7IDANsuu James Hart
and Curtis Collins

Haida artist and Hereditary Chief 7IDANsuu James Hart has earned international acclaim for his towering poles, stately cedar sculptures and massive bronzes — monumental works that extend the long continuum of Haida visual traditions into powerful new forms. This richly illustrated publication draws on extensive interviews with the artist to sketch the evolution of his five-decade practice.

248 pages, $60.00
ISBN 978-1-77327-227-6
Published Oct. 1, 2025
Figure 1 Publishing in collaboration
with the Audain Art Museum

RICHARD JOHNSON
RESILIENCE

Richard Johnson

by Lucie Bergeron-Johnson
and Tom Smart

A fascination with what he called "renegade architecture" led Canadian photographer Richard Johnson (1957-2021) to catalogue an eclectic array of small-scale buildings across Canada that told a story about the places they were from and the people who created them. Ephemeral ice fishing huts found in all 10 Canadian provinces and Newfoundland root cellars are the focus of this new photo book.

224 pages, $70.00
ISBN 978-1-77327-275-7
Published Oct. 1, 2025
Figure 1 Publishing

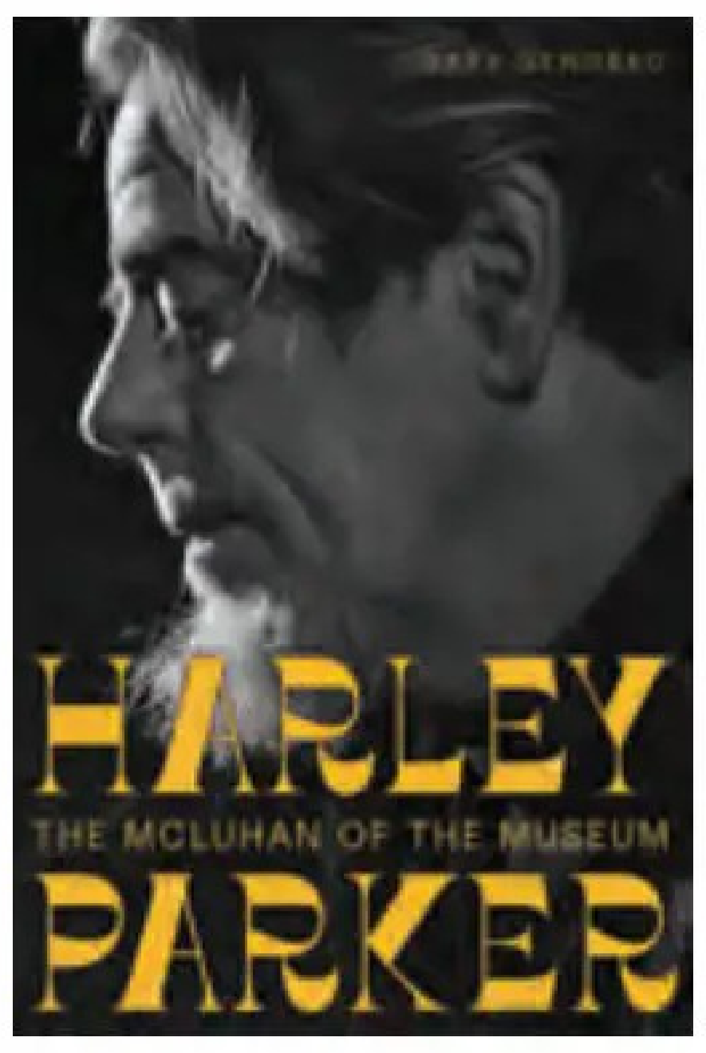
CHALLENGING
EXILE
ERIC M. ADAMS &
JORDAN STANGER-ROSS

Challenging Exile

by Eric M. Adams and Jordan Stanger-Ross

Challenging Exile delves into a shameful moment in Canada's past: the government's attempt to exile thousands of Japanese Canadians to Japan after the Second World War. This investigation of the origins, administration, litigation and aftermath of this attempt at gross injustice also shares first-hand stories of resilience.

384 pages, $34.95
ISBN 9780774872843
Published Oct. 15, 2025
UBC Press

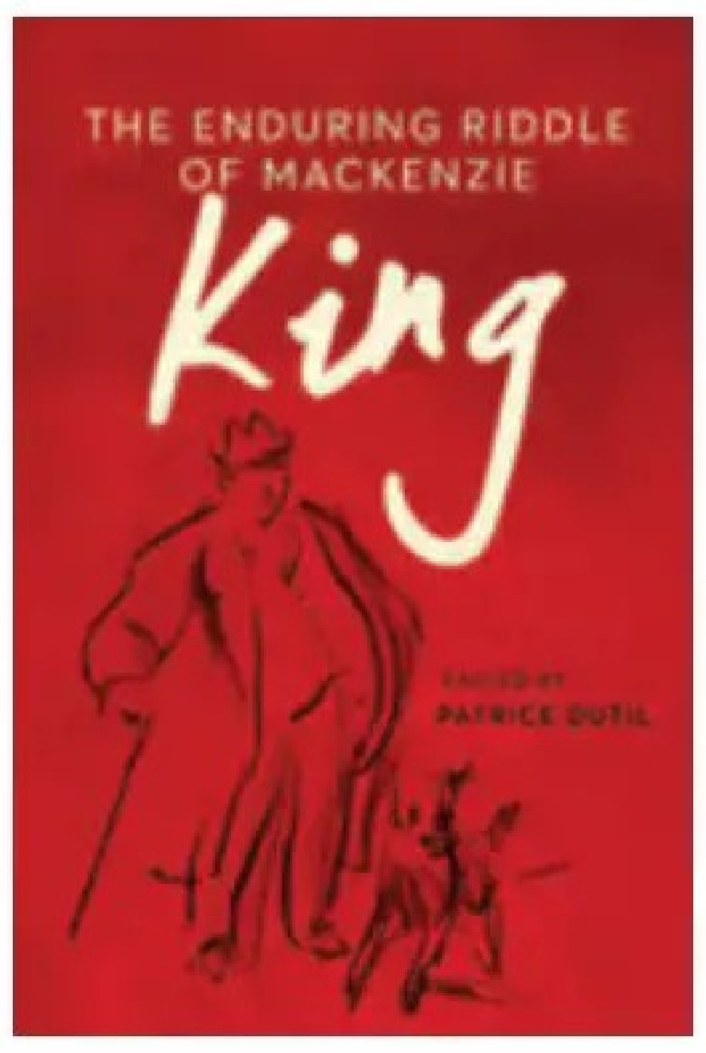


Harley Parker

by Gary Genosko

Gary Genosko uncovers the legacy of Harley Parker (1915-92) — Canadian museum exhibition designer, typographer and painter — and explores his innovative concepts reshaping museums as perceptual laboratories. A related title is *The Culture Box: Museums as Media*, by Harley Parker and edited by Gary Genosko.

268 pages, $29.99
ISBN 9781772127935
Published May 15, 2025
University of Alberta Press

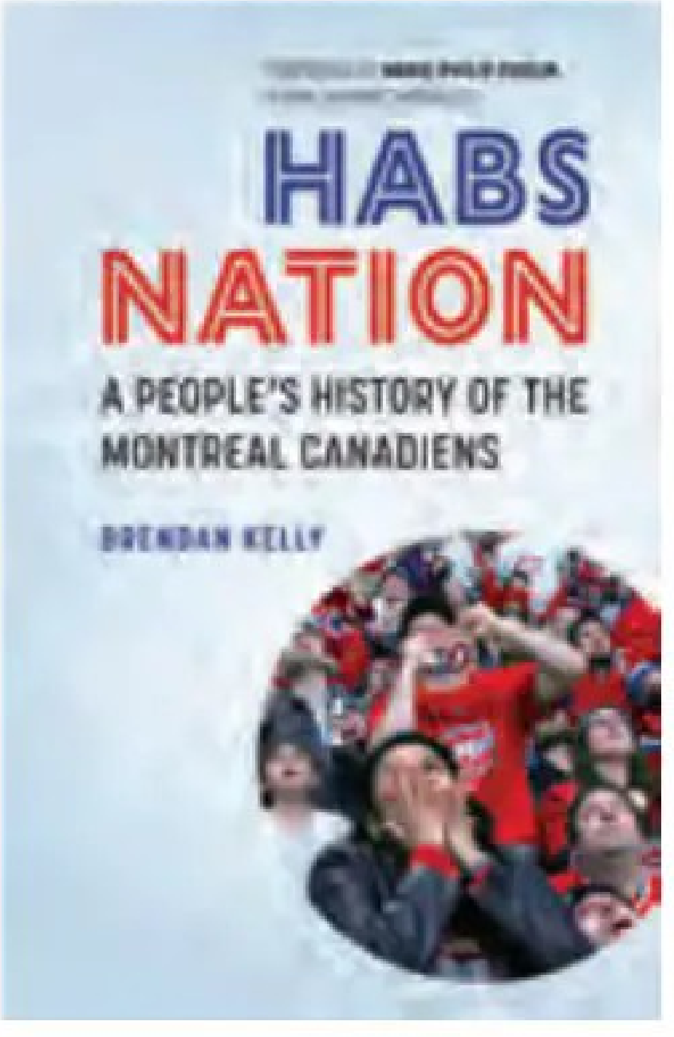


The Enduring Riddle of Mackenzie King

edited by Patrice Dutil

A giant of Canadian history. A hapless bachelor who practically worshipped his mother. A racist and antisemite typical of his generation. An astoundingly effective Liberal Party leader. *The Enduring Riddle of Mackenzie King* assembles a who's who of historians to untangle the legacy of Canada's longest-serving, most controversial and possibly greatest prime minister.

402 pages, $49.95
ISBN 9780774871860
Published Oct. 1, 2025
UBC Press



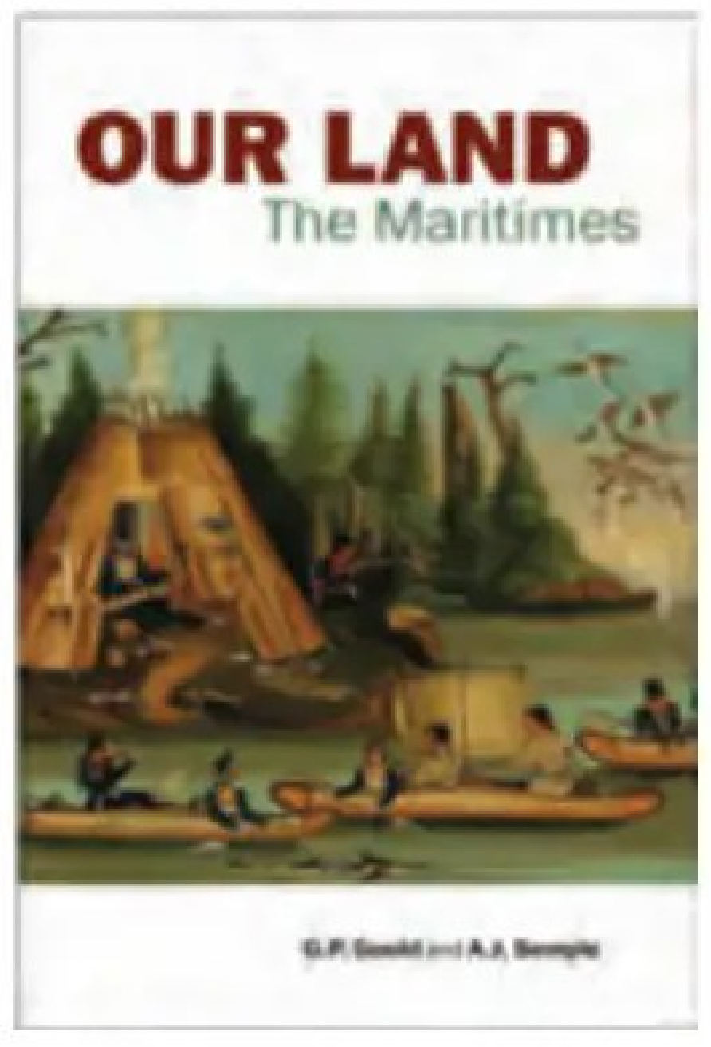
Habs Nation

by Brendan Kelly,
foreword by Marie-Philip Poulin

"I've read *The Game*, I've read *Roy's Winning, Nothing Else*, Brodeur's *Beyond the Crease*. Among all these, Kelly's opus stands out because it's more than a book about hockey, about a team; it's about a religion for Quebecers and how they came to be throughout the years. If you're only going to read one hockey book this year, this should be the one."

— *Karine Hains*, The Hockey News

236 pages, $27.95
ISBN 9781771864008
Published Oct. 1, 2025
Baraka Books

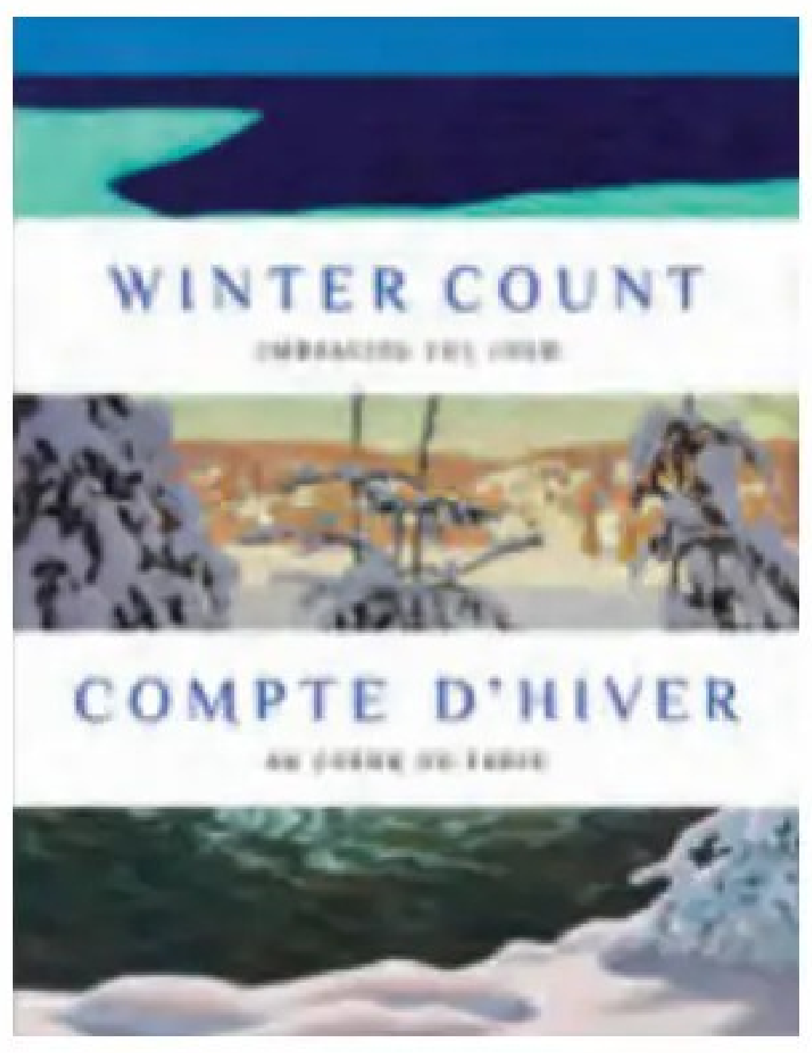


Our Land

edited by G.P. Gould & A.J. Semple

Our Land — a major work of history by Indigenous leaders — provides the historical record of acknowledgment of Aboriginal title and an analysis of why it still exists today.

296 pages, $24.95
ISBN 9781773104539
Published June 24, 2025
Goose Lane Editions
and New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council



Winter Count | Compte d'hiver

by Katerina Atanassova, Wahsontiio Cross, Anabelle Kienle Ponka and Jocelyn Piirainen

This all-encompassing volume brings together major works of Indigenous, Canadian and European art from the 19th to the 21st century and invites readers to embrace the season in all its forms.

304 pages, $55.00
ISBN 9781773104928
Published Nov. 25, 2025
Goose Lane Editions
and National Gallery of Canada

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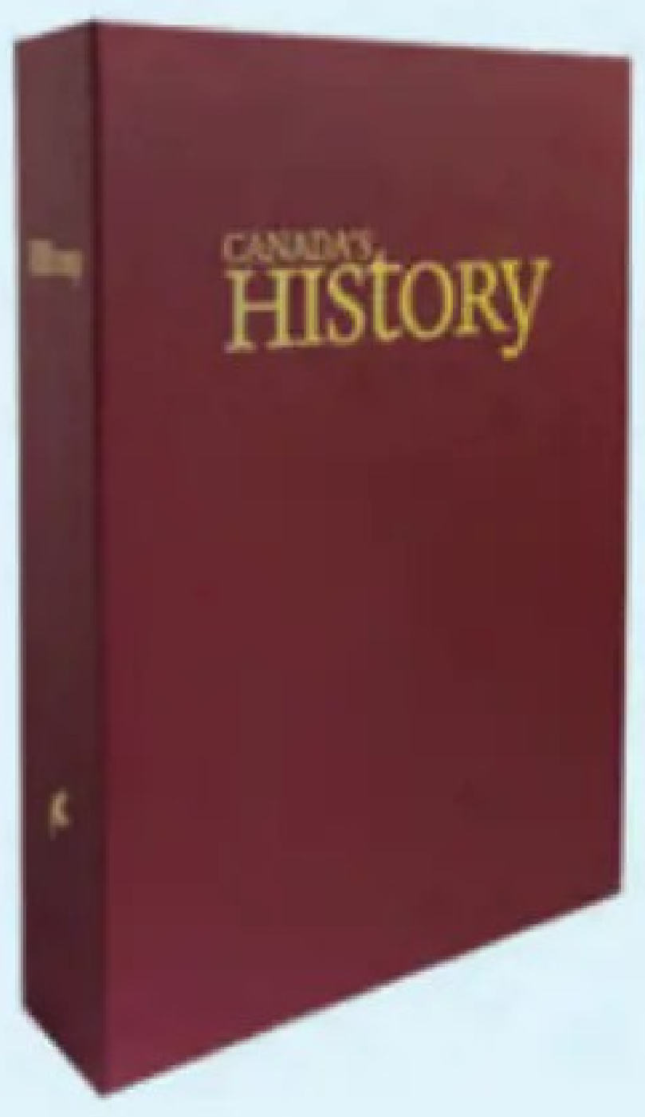

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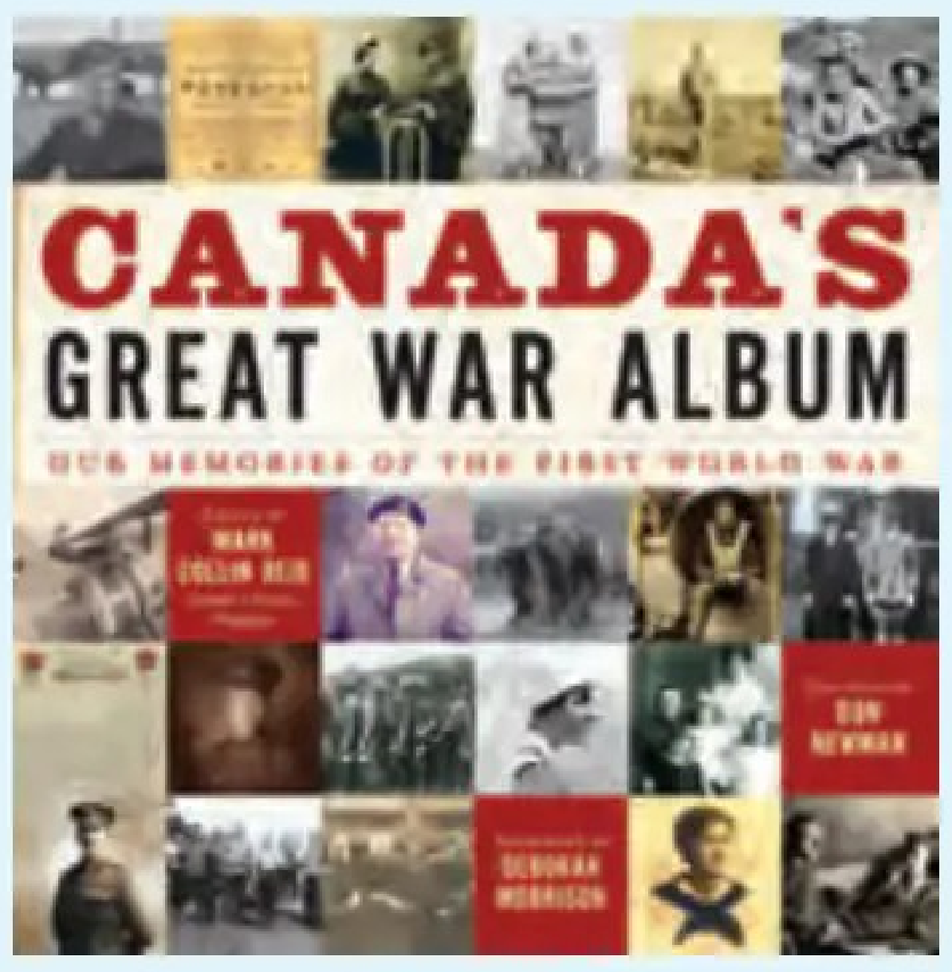
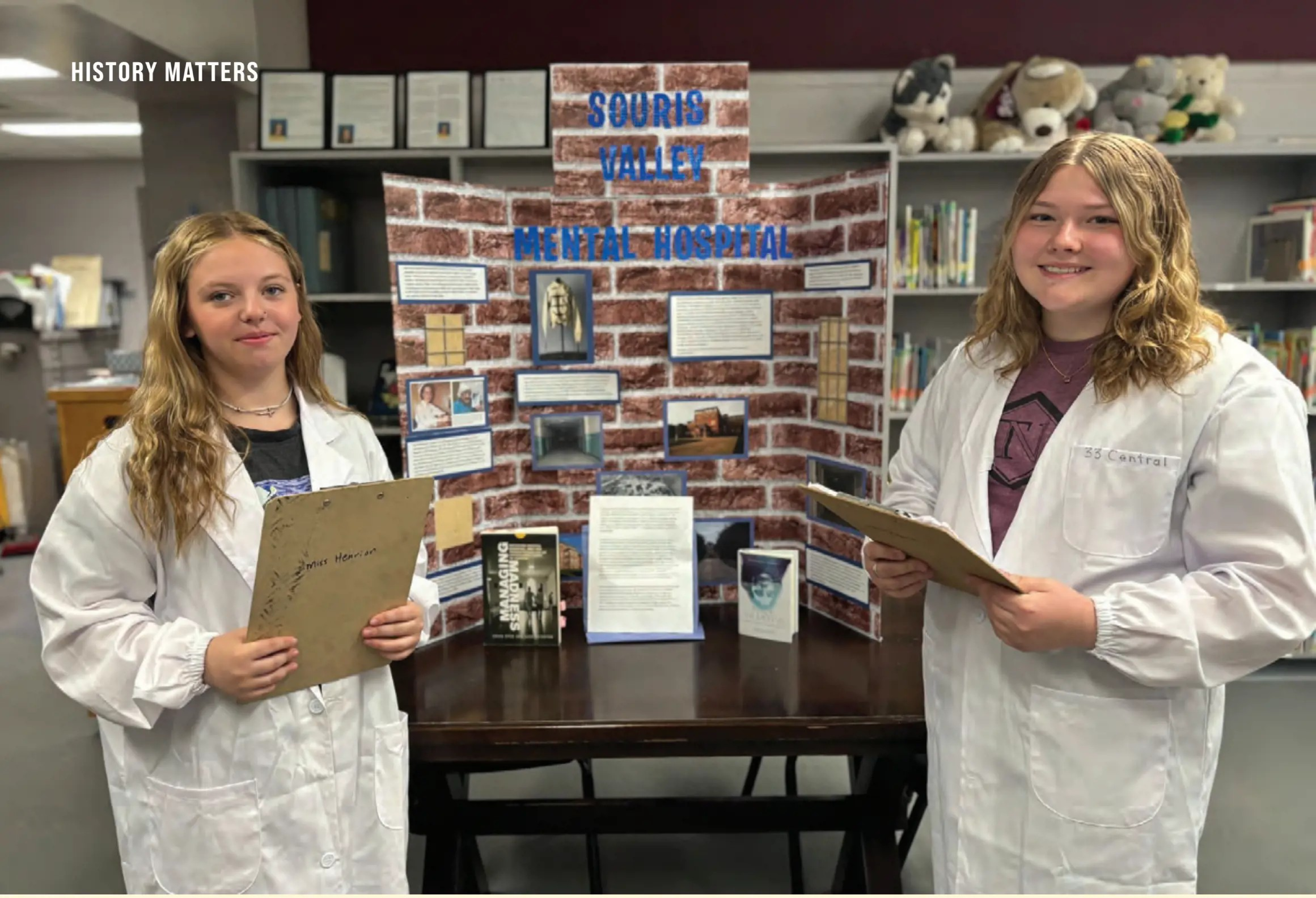


Canada's Great War Album

edited by Mark Collin Reid

Canada's Great War Album is a remarkable collection of Canadian photographs, memorabilia and stories of the war. Included are contributions from Peter Mansbridge, Charlotte Gray, J.L. Granatstein, Christopher Moore, Jonathan Vance and Tim Cook.

Special price $23.95, 240 pages
CanadasHistory.ca/Store
or phone 1-888-816-0997
ISBN 978-1-44342-015-0
HarperCollins Canada/Canada's History Society



Life lessons

The Heritage Fair National Showcase participants followed their hearts

By Kamila Costello

Above: Kendyl Johnston (left) and Brityn Palmer were selected at the Regina Regional Heritage Fair to advance to the national showcase

COURTESY OF KENDYL JOHNSTON

The inaugural Heritage Fair National Showcase highlights the passion and curiosity of students from across Canada. The online exhibition featured 80 of the top student projects selected from regional heritage fairs in spring 2025.

Students dug into questions close to their hearts and uncovered stories that connect the past to our present. Through interviews, archives and their own families' memories, these youth historians demonstrate how history isn't just something to study, but also something we live.

The National Showcase is part of Canada's National History Society's goal to raise public awareness of this cherished program and to increase participation to 50,000 students by 2027. With the help of generous donors and a strong network of educators, we've invested in classroom resources and professional development, and we're already seeing results. Student participation increased 24 per cent last year and their work is stronger than ever.

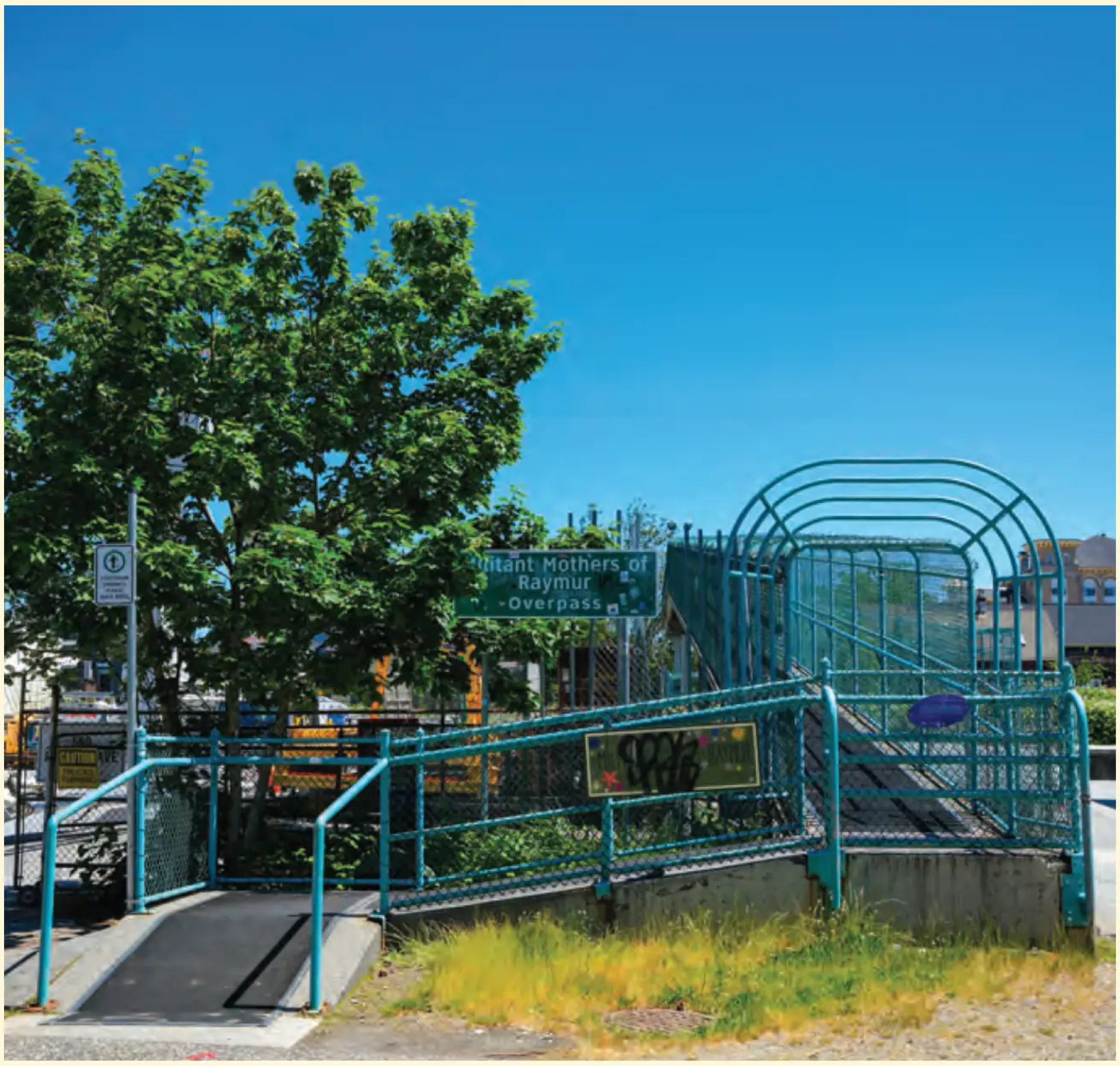
"Both the student projects and interviews seem to improve every year," says a coordinator from British Columbia. "We're seeing students go beyond facts to present multiple perspectives, delve into the stories and narratives, and make personal connections to their heritage."

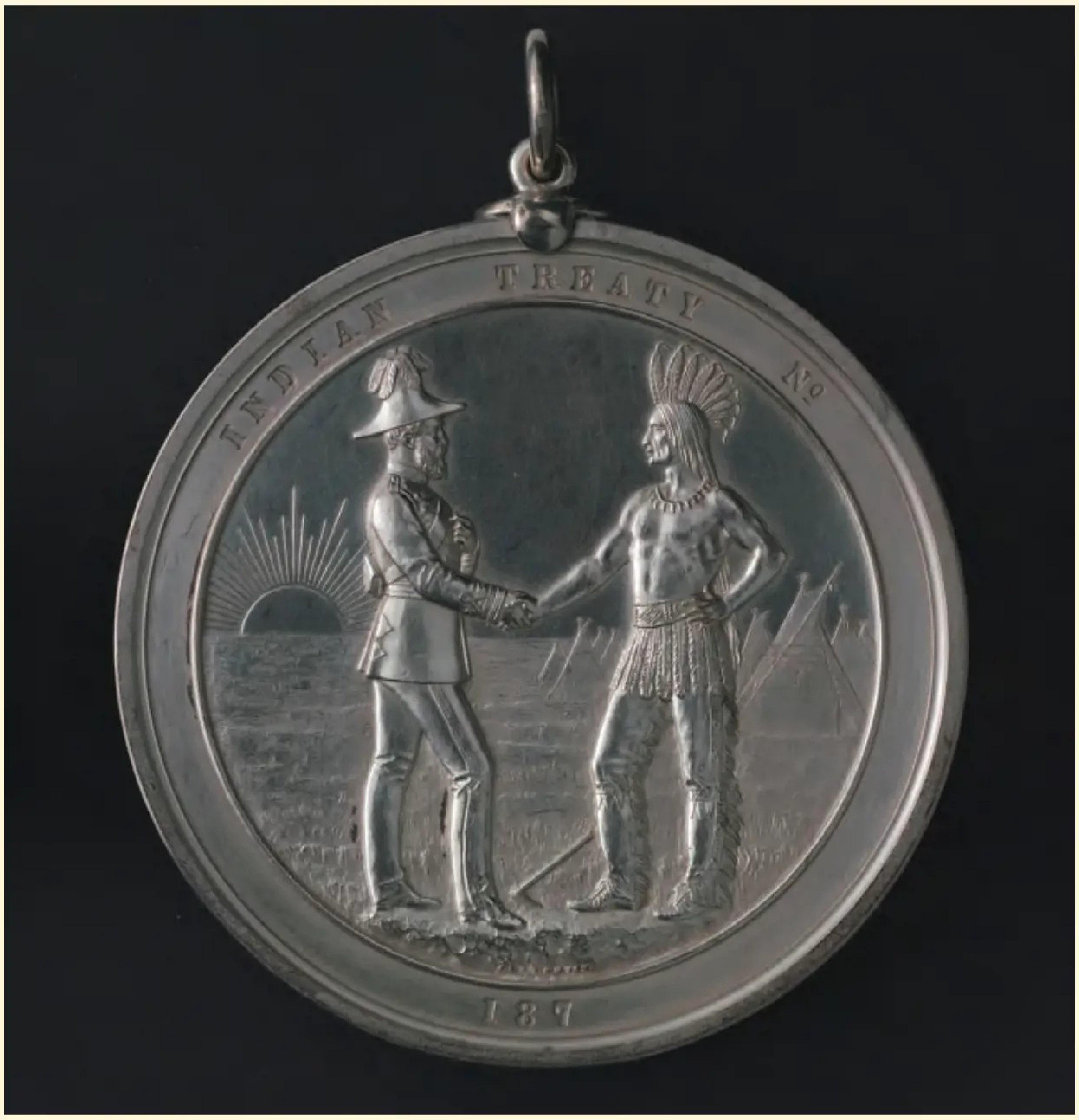
Selecting just four winners was no easy feat. The projects featured here stood out for the depth of their research and the creativity they brought to telling Canadian stories that matter. The students will each receive a $500 registered education savings plan and paid travel for a special celebration in Ottawa.

Militant Mothers

Jasmine, 11, tackled the inspiring story of the "Militant Mothers of Raymur," women who risked everything in 1971 to protect children from crossing unsafe railway tracks on their way to school in Vancouver. "They protested by physically stopping trains," explains Jasmine, who learned how their civil disobedience forced the city to build the Keefer Street Overpass. Diving into archives, murals and newspapers, Jasmine discovered how everyday mothers became activists. "They proved that petitions don't always work — you sometimes need action," she says. Their fight for safety inspired Jasmine to see history as "a way of showing how people can change their communities."

Jasmine Kaur Sodhi,
Vancouver,
British Columbia





Asotamakewin:

God's Lake First Nation and the signing of Treaty 5

For Valentina, 15, her pursuit of history is deeply personal: her great-great-grandfather, Chief Peter Watt of God's Lake First Nation, signed an adhesion to Treaty 5 in 1909. "I wanted to know why he signed and what was promised," she says. Her research led her through archives, academic reports and interviews with Elders, uncovering how the Cree saw treaty as *Asotamakewin* — "the promise" to share land. Valentina found that while her community expected support, "life changed instead — children were sent to residential schools and many promises weren't kept." For her, the project was about truth: "Treaty is still important today. It's a living promise for how we live together."

Valentina Hill,
God's Lake Narrows,
Manitoba

TOP: ALAMY; BOTTOM: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

Women in Farming:

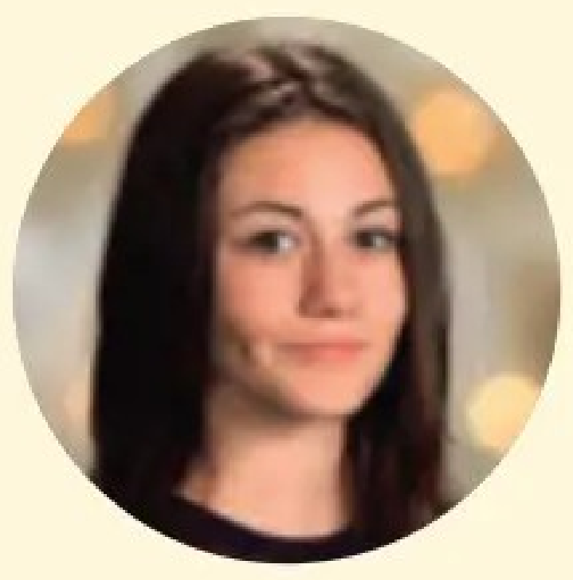
Rooted in tradition, growing the future

Cora, 10, began her project with a simple question: Why is her family farm called "R.A. Rose and Sons" when her aunt Keisha does so much? Through interviews with her aunt and grandfather, Cora learned that women had always been central to farming. "My great-grandmother cooked turkey dinners for harvest crews six days a week!" marvels Cora, who discovered that women like her aunt, now president of the P.E.I. Federation of Agriculture, continue that legacy today. "I found out women have always been farmers — they just weren't always called that," she says, proud to carry their story forward.

**Cora Lukeman,
Antigonish,
Nova Scotia**

Naufrages

Flavie, 13, turned a family memory into history by researching the fate of three steel trawlers built in 1969. Two — *Lady Dorianne* and *Lady Audette II* — sank within months, earning them the nickname "floating coffins." Her grandfather survived one of the wrecks, but sadly "he didn't get the help he needed afterward," Flavie explains. She pieced together the story from newspaper archives, documentaries and conversations with her grandmother. For Flavie, her research centred on remembrance: "It's important to honour the victims and make sure tragedies like this never happen again." CH



**Flavie Blanchard,
Bas-Caraquet,
New Brunswick**

APOLLO II
4007

TOP: COURTESY OF CORA LUKEMAN; BOTTOM: WIKIPEDIA/DR WILSON

National Showcase Participants

ALBERTA

KALLI BALL AND AUBREY BADIN

LUCA ALEXANDER JAPHET

LUCIANA MENDOZA CAUPAZ AND AOIFE MERNAGH

MEHNAZ KAHN

MILA BHOJANI

NABA KAZI

TESSA MEIKLE

YAEL WOLCH

BRITISH COLUMBIA

ANESTE JUNG

AYAAN SHARMA

CASSIOPIA WARDMAN

DOMKA NEZHINSKY AND ALEXI SOLMONSON

FINDLAY BROWN

GURREHMAT KAUR

HAZEL HORSLEY

JASMINE KAUR SODHI

KITTY HUANG

LAYCEE HERMAN

LILLIAN ALLARD

MAELLE FRATTON AND MADELYN DUNNET

ROMAN SAVELIEV

SOFIA ROIG-MASAND

SUKHREET KAUR GAREWAL

MANITOBA

ANNA MCRAE

ARLO EDWARDS

MACKENZIE MITCHELL

VALENTINA HILL

NEW BRUNSWICK

ANGE KENMOE

FINN STUART

FLAVIE BLANCHARD

JAIZ JOBY

JOANNA DINAN

MORGAN PLOURDE

OLIVIER MELANSON

OMOTOLA ONIFADE

NOVA SCOTIA

ARUSHI AURUP

BAYLEIGH MARSHALL

CHRISTENA MACCALDER

CORA LUKEMAN

DAWSON DEAMOND

EMERSON HUBKA

HARLOWE STEWART

MAXWELL ZINCK

TAEROY AULENBACK

WES BALASUBRAMANIAN

ONTARIO

ELEANOR HARGREAVES

ELODIE WILSON

EVELYN CHIANG AND CYNTHIA RUAN

EVERETT FISHER

HARRY YOST

IDYN STEELE-HENDERSON

JOEY WILKIE AND HEINRICH XIAO

MAYA PEREZ

MIA FUMERTON

MICHAEL BUGDEN

PORTER GEEN AND JACKSON GEEN

SAMIKSHA RANA

SARA BAIG AND SAAYUJA BHARGAVA

TANNER SWART

ZOHA NASIR

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

BENJAMIN ADAMS AND BENOÎT ARSENAULT

COHEN HAMMILL

KJ STEWART

TAYLER WARDROPE

QUEBEC

ELIA TURCOTTE

ÈVE-MARIE JOLIN

FLORENCE JOLIN

JACOB NONOO

LIONEL BITIBALY SUN

MATHIEU TOULOUSE

SASKATCHEWAN

ALEX DEMOSKOFF AND LINCOLN MAGNUS

BENTLEY CHELACK

KENDYL JOHNSTON AND BRITYN PALMER

MITAKSHI DHANDA

PAYTON JOHNSON

SCARLETT CHEWKA

SLOANE WILLNER

SWATHI SURESH KUMAR

VICTORIA DYCK AND KAITLYN DYCK

VICTORIA ROY

YUKON

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ISAAC TREMBLAY-GORDON

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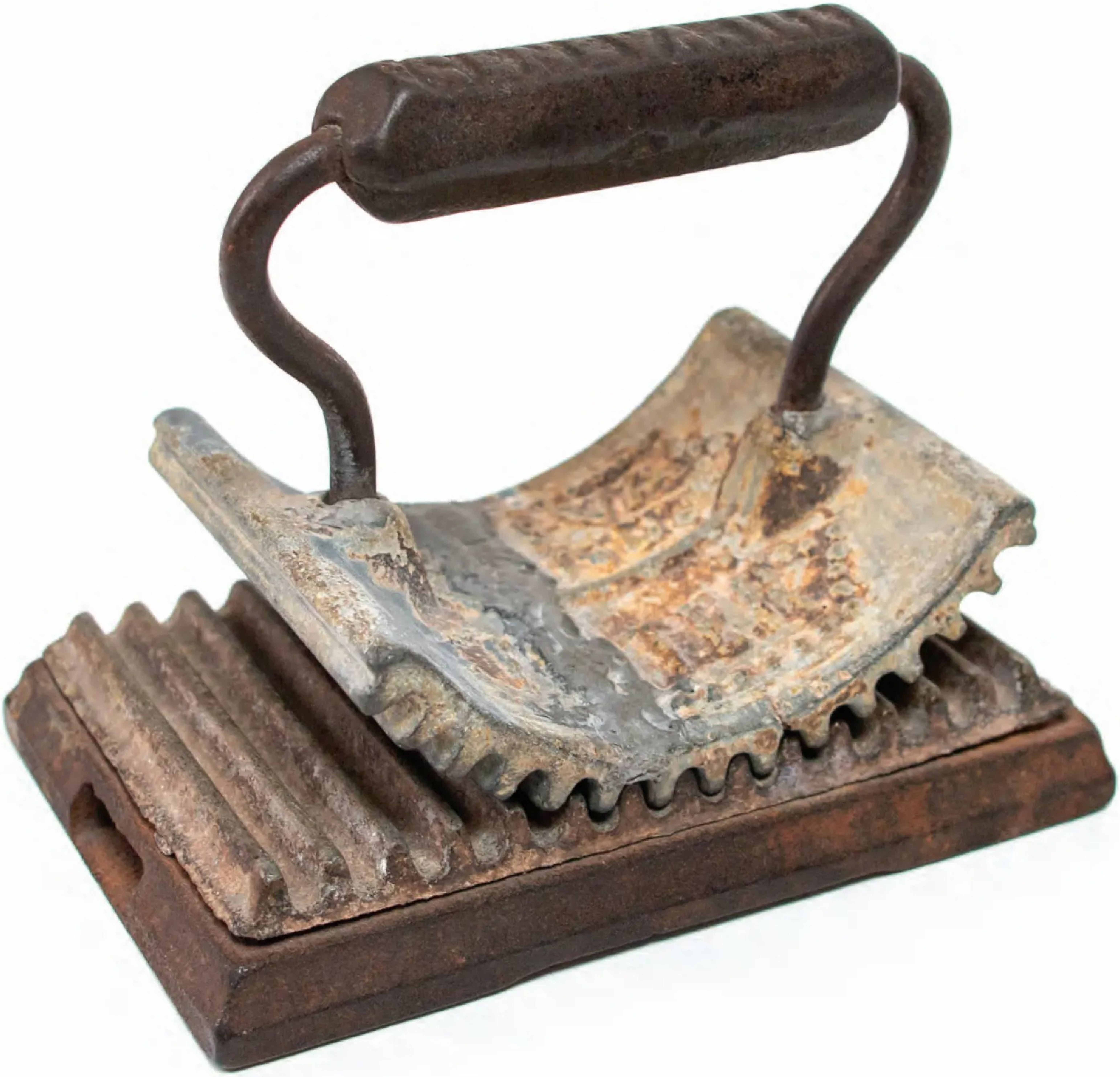

ARTIFACT FROM THE MANITOBA MUSEUM / PHOTO BY ANDREW WORKMAN

In the fold

Tales and treasures from the rich legacy of the Hudson's Bay Company

This unusual-looking two-piece iron, with ridges on both the rocker top piece and the heating-plate base, was made to create soft flutes in fabric. This type of gentle ripple effect was called fluting because it resembles a pan flute. Unlike pleats, which feature crisper folds, fluting appears more subtle.

In terms of how it was used, you might think that only the heating plate would be warmed on a stove, but textile bloggers have been experimenting with these types of irons, and it seems that both the plate and rocker need to be heated up considerably to achieve the desired fluting effect.

This iron was patented in 1866 and brought to Rosser, Man., in 1891; it was donated to the Hudson's Bay Company Museum Collection in 1957.

— Amelia Fay, curator of anthropology and the HBC Collection at the Manitoba Museum

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We provide practical support to classroom and community educators who have a passion for history but limited time and resources. More than 25,000 educators receive our teaching newsletters, distributed in English and French. We offer this national community online opportunities that build skills and knowledge, such as historical thinking webinars and the Canada's History Forum. Their enthusiasm in turn motivates students to explore history; participation in youth Heritage Fairs all over Canada increased by 24 per cent last year. By administering the Governor General's History Awards, we recognize outstanding history educators and community leaders every year.

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"My students were able to learn from the untold stories of Canadians who showed that, together, we can achieve extraordinary things."

Chantal Clabrough, 2023 recipient,
Governor General's History Award
for Excellence in Teaching

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